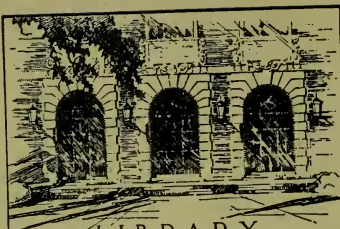


LUTHEMEE AND DILLOO

EDWARD JENKINS. M.P.





LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823
J41 Lu
v.2

LUTCHMEE AND DILLOO.



LUTCHMEE AND DILLOO

A Study of West Indian Life

BY

EDWARD JENKINS

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.



WILLIAM MULLAN & SON

34 PATERNOSTER ROW LONDON

4 DONEGAL PLACE BELFAST

1877

Hazell, Watson, and Viney, Printers, London and Aylesbury.

823
J41 lu
v. 2

CONTENTS TO VOL. II.

CHAP.	PAGE
XX. SARCOPHAGUS	1
XXI. AN UNGRATEFUL SLAVE	29
XXII. THE CONSPIRATORS	40
XXIII. QUAINI RIVALRY	57
XXIV. SHORT AND SAD	75
XXV. PLOTTING	82
XXVI. DIDACTIC	96
XXVII. JUSTICE	118
XXVIII. A TREACHEROUS WOMAN	139
XXIX. BROWN AND WHITE	156
XXX. "TO HIT THE MEAN"	176
XXXI. "UNCERTAIN, COY, AND HARD TO PLEASE"	198
XXXII. CHARITY SEEKING NOT HER OWN	211
XXXIII. THE PURSUIT OF CHARITY	233
XXXIV. COLONIAL GOVERNORS AND THE LOCAL ARISTOC- RACY	253

LUTCHMEE AND DILLOO.

CHAPTER XX.

SARCOPHAGUS.

ONE person had, throughout Craig's illness, shown a remarkable interest in his welfare. Isabel Marston, living a half-solitary life, in a climate and amongst associations, the very idea of which would be enough to depress a girl who knew anything of the versatile charms of civilized societies, found in this tragic incident something more exciting than any of the fictional hazards in the novels with which she was wont to relieve her *ennui*. A young, brave, not unhandsome fellow, gentle-minded though rough-limbed,

whom she had always regarded as a more than agreeable acquaintance, and about whom her idle fancy again and again built airy fabrics of hope and pleasure, suddenly brought to the verge of death, and so situated that she might not with any propriety offer to give him those attentions to which her heart impelled her,—this, to a young girl in her circumstances, was a bit of romance, very perilous to her peace of mind. Mr. Marston, with all his affection for his daughter, was by nature so occupied with himself, and had so little idea of any romance in conditions he used to feel to be the reverse of romantic, that he had no suspicion of the state of his daughter's feelings towards Craig. With herself, even, they had hitherto been rather vague symptoms of love than the real phenomena of passion ;

the less real, no doubt, because Craig, in his occasional intercourse, had never shown (and we, behind the scenes, may say had never felt) anything but the pleasurable esteem of a youth for a beautiful and unattainable object. The best evidence of the coolness of his mind in relation to Isabel Marston was the fact that during the whole period of his delirium her name had not passed his lips. He was very young, very shy, very pure in his thoughts and in his life, and curiously unsusceptible of passionate emotions. Nothing so possessed him as the calm, sweet reverence he felt towards his mother; after which, strongest of his feelings, were his love of practical engagements and his ambition for success. Such a nature may have in it great depths of quiet and pellucid passion, which, however,

can be stirred up only by extraordinary storms or unusual perturbations of the elements of the soul.

Poor Isabel Marston was obliged—in that equatorial atmosphere—to fume over Craig's illness in secret. Her father, she well knew, would never have listened to any suggestion of an intimacy with the Scotch overseer. Mr. Marston's innocent unsuspicion of such an unnatural conjunction could not have been more clearly testified than by the manner in which he received the hint thrown out by Gonzales, regarding Isabel's sudden illness when she heard of Craig's accident. The last thing he could have attributed to his daughter was a fatuous interest in a farmer's son. Was not her mother only twenty-five removes from a baronet? Had she not from her earliest

years been trained to assume the airs, the position, the style of thought of the aristocracy, and were not all her acquaintanceships in Demerara, except with the Governor's family, and the military, and the judges, well understood to be on the footing of condescension to the exigencies of the magistrate's official position? He never took the trouble even to let these thoughts pass through his mind. They were taken for granted—they were the postulates of his rank.

I know nothing more discountenancing to the interest of a romance of love than the elementary deficiency arising from the fact that one of the two parties essential to the evolution of the plot is not only careless, but unconscious of the flames which are consuming the other. The man who is

sleeping next door to a burning house—the person who is sitting over a powder-magazine towards which the fire is rapidly hissing and sparkling its way along the fuse—may evoke an excited interest, and set our sympathies in lively action. But when you have a soul that is at once unconscious of the fire which is burning away another's heart and indifferent to the results—a soul the emotion of which bears no relation whatever to the other's flames, or perils or fate—here you have a situation cold and absurd in the extreme. The romance is one-sided, the play is scarcely worth the candle.

Nevertheless, such is the unhappy state of things which it falls to my lot to narrate. Craig was as cold as an iceberg, and quite as insensible to the furnace that was glowing and fuming within a few miles of him. It

is a grotesque irony of fortune, and of fiction too, that a fair, elegant, well-bred girl should have been consuming with passion for the cold, unsophisticated, matter-of-fact son of an Ayrshire farmer. The subject is so painful that I cannot dwell upon it.

However, the state of Craig's mind had for the present little to do with Isabel Marston's interest in him. It is fortunate, for no small portion of the human race, that love may, like a candle, burn at one end. Perhaps all of us who suffer, equally benefit, from unrequited affections. One often picks up unexpected blessings thrown in one's way by unknown lovers or friends. It is well if we ourselves sometimes repay our debts to humanity by distributing similarly gratuitous benefactions. The magistrate's daughter sent a message every day

over to Belle Susanne in the name of her father, to inquire how the "young gentleman" was. Her messenger was known in Mr. Marston's family as Sarcophagus, so dubbed by his master from a fancied resemblance in colour and otherwise to some Egyptian stone coffins in the British Museum, and perhaps, for the further reason, that there seemed to be nothing in him. The mind of Sarcophagus is not worth an elaborate analysis. It was a *tabula rasa* with a witness. It was always wiped off clean as a new slate. It took its impressions from moment to moment. It was deficient in memory, in logical or any sequence but that of time or expression: and it seemed to know as little of the characters that were written upon it, and to be as incapable of deciphering them as the

Rosetta stone itself. His language, picked up mostly from the pulpit exercitations of Baptist or Wesleyan preachers, some of whom are as lamentably awkward in preaching to Negroes as they are incapable of evangelizing the rural clods in England, in a simple, comprehensible way, was strongly interlarded with words of many syllables, of which the meaning and fitness were mere matters of chance to him. I am not sure that his notion of the meanings of words were not formed on some rough principle of onomatopœia. It would be impossible to report him at length to the reader's apprehension, for one needed to hear him and to be immediately *au fait* with the relations of his discourse to be able to assign any particular idea to some of his phrases. The best instinct of Sarcophagus was a dumb

one. You could explain more to him by signs than by words. If you tossed him a bundle of words, he used them as a gorilla would use a bundle of sticks. He unaccountably mixed and twisted them up together, he tore them to shreds between his teeth. Some fibres might remain, but they gave dubious testimony of the original form or shape of the communication.

Isabel's first message about Craig was confided to this messenger. His idiosyncrasy would, she knew, be useful in one way, if it were embarrassing in another. You might safely trust him with any secret—he could not disclose it. She concocted a message which she thought she could so impress on his mind that he could carry it accurately. Marston's cook was a good one. She could make many good things. Her

jellies, flavoured with guava and coloured with bright juices, were excellent. Though he was supposed to be dying, what to an unsophisticated girl could appear more natural than to send over to the invalid a shape of jelly? A shape was accordingly produced. It was surrounded by ice to prevent it from what the ingenious Miriam termed "sitting down." It was enwrapped in a snowy napkin, and Sarcophagus was to bear it to Belle Susanne and deliver this message,—

"Missa Masson sent compliments wid dis jelly for de young gen'leman dat's sick, an want to know how he git along."

The simplicity and the vernacular ease of this message often repeated to and recited by Sarcophagus, encouraged the hope that it would reach its destination along with the jelly in a compact shape.

Sarcophagus raised a preliminary objection.

“’Ow about de ice, missa? Dere ain’t no referumshun in de messinge to de ice?”

“No, you stupid, of course not. The ice doesn’t matter. It is only to keep the jelly cool. Say what I tell you, and nothing more. Do you hear?”

Off went Sarcophagus with the pail, covered in neatly with the white damask, singing as he went,—

Yee ha!—yo ha!

Who ’see de niggah?

Yo ha!—yee ha!

Where go de niggah?

Singing for Jee—roo—sa—lem,

Chorus: Singing for Jee—roo—

Singing for Jee—roo—

Singing for Jee—roo—sa—lem!

The result was that Sarcophagus sang Miss Marston’s message clean out of his head.

When he arrived at the little wooden bridge which lay across the canal to the middle dam of Belle Susanne estate, he took off the remnant of felt, which he called a cap, and scratched his head in the blazing sun, as, with a puzzled expression on his face, he contemplated the pail.

“Dis yer pail,” he said, “am gwine to Massa—Massa—Massa?—Bress me; Sah-coffingcuss am de on’y name dis niggah nebber discommember. Massa am *Massa*—Missa am *Missa*—but Massa what? Missa what? Sometime ’members, sometime dismembers. Dere ain’t one word ob de ammunition dat hang about de corners ob dis yer cocoa-nut. Golly! Dere’s de pail, but where de messinge? (scratch) Ha! I got um! ‘Missa—Missa—Missa’—No, de ideas hab salivated. I’s quite sur-

plushed—'Missa'—yes dat am de fust word—No! Golly! Here's a humdrum."

He stooped down and removed the napkin. Beneath it sparkled in the sun the broken ice. In the middle of the ice lay in the reversed mould, also glittering in the sun, the pellucid jelly.

"Ha!" said Sarcophagus, struck with an idea at this vision, "I reciprocate de sarcomstiances ob de case. Missa say, 'Take um ice to—'. I'm observate, 'What I say about de jelly?' Missa Bella responsify, 'No matter 'bout de jelly, it keep de ice warm.' Ha! if de jelly inconsequenshul, den dere ain't no cause why Sahcoffingcuss not take de jelly, keep the ice from dissolushun."

Forthwith Sarcophagus extracted the shape of jelly, and proceeded, in the ab-

sence of a spoon, by processes not to be described, to entomb it very effectually in his capacious interior. He was smacking his lips over the cooling and luscious composition, when a sharp cut of a whip over his half-naked shoulder caused him to leap to his feet with an exclamation of pain. These poor Negroes are only distended babies in brown skins.

“What are you doing, you rascal? Miss Marston never gave you that jelly to eat on my bridge. Where were you going with it?”

It was Drummond, who had been down looking at the “koker” which regulated the outlet of water to the sea, and who had approached the Negro unperceived.

“I’se goin’ to dis ’state, Massa Drummon’,” replied Sarcophagus, rubbing his

shoulders; "but you'm disconnected wid de objective purpose ob de messinge, w'en you'm instigate de jelly as gwin wid de rest ob de articles."

"So I see!" replied Drummond, smiling. "The jelly now will only accompany 'the articles,' as you call them, if *you* do, and in a disconnected form beyond a doubt. But, if you were coming to my house with that parcel, sir," he went on more sternly, as he poised his whip in a menacing way, "will you tell me what message you had to deliver, and why you dared to open the pail and eat the jelly?"

Sarcophagus scratched his head again.

"Dis niggah quite conflustricated, Massa Drummon'. Missa ober dere gib me dis pail and dis ice, wid strict injections to take 'tickler keer ob de ice. I'se 'tickler

keerful ob de ice, and wen I cum to dis bridge, 'xaminated de contents to see how de ice a gettin' on. Den I see it resolving away in consequens ob de heat ob dis yer jelly," holding up the tin mould he had emptied.

"Jelly! you infernal scamp; there isn't a glimpse of jelly left. Mr. Marston will send you to gaol for this as sure as your name's Sarcophagus."

"Massa Drummon', de young lady mos' 'tickerlerly stated to me de jelly not any matter—de ice was de subjec' ob de mes-singe."

"Well, what *is* the message?"

Sarcophagus was absolutely nonplussed by this question direct. He looked ruefully at the pail—at the mould—at Mr. Drummond—at the sky—for an answer to the

conundrum. It did not come. He made a bold dash.

“Missa order me discomplement Massa Craig wid de ice, and gib her bequest if Massa want to know 'ow she goin' on.”

The face of Sarcophagus expressed a sense of triumphant relief when he had delivered himself of these anxiously gathering fragments of his message.

“Look here,” said Drummond, whose sharp mind began to see something of the real state of the case. “Miss Isabel never gave you such a message as that to knock about the estates with. She gave you this pail, did she?”

The Negro nodded.

“And this napkin?”

Nod again.

“And this ice?”

“Iss, massa, de ice 'tickerlerly.”

“Confound you, shut up! And this mould full of jelly?”

Sarcophagus nodded hesitatingly.

“She told you to bring it to my house, eh?”

“'Ceptin' de jelly, massa; dat jelly was expensively expected from de messinge.”

“Be quiet, I tell you. She sent it to the young gentleman who is sick?”

Sarcophagus began to see light, and nodded. “Ha! dat's de objec' ob de messinge.”

“She told you to give her compliments, or her love?”

Drummond liked his joke.

“Complimen's, massa, dat's de 'spression,” replied the Negro with dignity.

“And to say this was for him?”

“Massa, you’m oberhearn ebery word ob dat dere messinge ; all ’cept de remarkation ’bout de jelly.”

“Now I’ll tell you what,” said Drummond, “you’re either the biggest fool or the biggest knave in Demerara, I don’t know which. But if you don’t want me to cowhide you on the spot, and to get your master to punish you after, come up to the house with me. Take back the note I shall give you, and hark you, don’t you dare to say a word to Miss Isabel or anyone else about what you have done with the jelly. You’re not so great a fool I expect as to do that, but if you do I’ll have you sent to Georgetown gaol for three months.”

Sarcophagus looked the picture of innocence as he took up the pail and followed Drummond to his house. There the latter

quietly relieved the pail of the ice, and told Missa to put the empty mould away for a day or two. Then he indited this note,—

“Mr. Drummond presents his compliments to Miss Marston, and begs to acknowledge on behalf of young Craig, who is lying very ill, the receipt of her very humane and thoughtful present of jelly for the patient. The latter is at present unable to enjoy anything of the sort, and cannot even be made conscious of the honour done to him by Miss Marston’s kind attention.

“Mr. Drummond would take the liberty to advise that any message sent by *Sarcophagus* should be in writing, as very great difficulty has been experienced in getting from him any message that could be under-

stood, and that he should hereafter in carrying any articles of the same sort for Miss Marston be particularly enjoined to take great care of the *ice*, which he carried so carelessly as to allow a good deal of it to slip out of the pail, thus endangering the jelly."

On his way home, the mind of Sarcophagus underwent a revulsion. Being charged with his carelessness about the ice, he reminded Miss Marston that she had herself told him it was not intended to be part of her present, and did not matter. Hence she did not suspect the truth. But, warned by Drummond's note, she took care to go over next day and see Missa Nina, and to arrange with her that in future, whenever Sarcophagus turned up at Belle Susanne,

with or without any message, or fragment of a message, he was to receive a slip of paper containing, in a word or two, an account of the patient's progress.

Craig knew nothing of the kind inquiries that were being daily made and answered on his behalf. Isabel very discreetly kept herself in the background throughout. The little delicacies that went from Mr. Marston's house to the sick room were sent in his name. Whatever Nina's ideas of the matter may have been, she did not take the trouble to express them. Drummond was too shrewd not to see that all this interest in his young overseer was not pure benevolence; or to believe that Mr. Marston, whom he knew as a good-natured, but selfish, and as he thought overproud person, would of his own motion take all this trouble. As to

the magistrate, he had some inkling of the kindly uses to which his kitchen was being devoted, but was too self-complacent to look upon this as anything but a piece of patronising charity, very proper to emanate from his house to any distressed white person in his neighbourhood. When Craig was able to bear it, Mr. Marston even rode over to see him, and to express his congratulations on the young man's recovery. At dinner the same evening he gave an account of his visit to ears that tingled at the recital; and then he astonished Isabel by adding,—

“The young fellow is pretty well bred, and talks very sensibly. He has no one to wait on him but that girl Nina, who does Drummond's housekeeping, and a Coolie woman, a funny little thing, who looks as innocent as a baby. A pretty woman too.”

O, Isabel, Isabel, what concord hath love with the devil, that this very guileless hint of a guileless presence near the sick couch of the poor Scotch boy should set thy whole being aglow with jealous indignation, and raise within thee sharp shoots of evil feeling towards one so infinitely beneath thee in all the graces and attractions of humanity?

“Is he allowed to read, papa?”

“No. Mr. Telfer goes over and reads to him occasionally. By the way, you often complain of *ennui*. Here is an opportunity for doing good. He is well enough now to sit up. You should take Miriam with you, or Sarcophagus, and go over and read to him sometimes. It would be quite a charity.”

“Do you think I might do so without remark?” said Isabel slyly, her heart meantime almost ceasing its action in the

suspense with which she awaited the answer.

“God bless my soul, Bell, what do you mean? Do you think any one would associate your name with that of a Scotch overseer lad, because you went over to do an act of kindness to him? Every one perfectly understands the footing on which all these people are permitted to hold intercourse with us, and your suggestion is, in the circumstances, ridiculous. Surely you would not allow such an idle consideration to interfere with what may be looked upon as a duty, however disagreeable?”

“Oh, no, papa!” returned his delighted daughter, smiling at his indignation. “You see I am timid, because I have no mamma to tell me better.”

The magistrate blinked his eyes rather

shyly, and Isabel, conscious that there was a duplicity in all this arrangement which seemed rather to be the result of circumstances than to be in any way chargeable to her, yet felt a little ashamed that her father should in reality be deceived. It was one of those critical positions which very often occur in human experience, in which absolute truth and candour lie in a balance with qualified truth and selfish inclination; and the poise, at the moment, appears to the soul so equal that it is easy to persuade oneself that either is right; or even that the wrong one is better. Was it to be expected that Isabel should frankly explain to her father a state of heart she had never clearly acknowledged to herself? Had he not fallen into the trap which might prove so dangerous both to her peace and to his?

Had she not honourably met the temptation with a deprecating caution? She held her conscience acquitted by the warning she had given her father, and we cannot any of us throw a stone at her. The exigencies of truth and honour are sometimes too great for humanity to meet, and I don't know that even angels can at all times balance righteous duty and inclination on needle-points or razor-edges.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN UNGRATEFUL SLAVE.

WHILE Craig lay on his sick bed, and Lutchmee was engrossed in her wearisome, but daily more pleasurable cares, the fortunes of some of our other characters were undergoing a critical change. Drummond's sharp eye detected that the Coolies, not only on Belle Susanne, but on adjacent estates, were uneasy. An overseer on Hofman's Lust had been beaten and left for dead. It was clear that a strong under-

current of excitement was moving through the whole Indian and Chinese population of the country. At the Georgetown Club, the rendezvous of Demerara gossip and scandal, Drummond found that his apprehensions were shared by other planters. He was a keen and cautious man, and resolved to anticipate the worst. His first care was to revise the organisation of his estate. Two drivers, who had taken part in the recent *mêlée*, were degraded; the explanation of this breach of faith with the rioters in regard to the promise he had made to let them all off if they returned to work, being, that it did not apply to officials of the estate, whose default could not be passed over without punishment. The sharp-witted Coolies took notice of this circumstance, and, slight and defensible as the act

may seem to outsiders, it had an important bearing on the subsequent relations of Drummond to his labourers. The full gravity of such incidents can scarcely be appreciated by any but those who have been intimately concerned in the management of the estates, or in the Government offices, of a Coolie-worked colony.

One of the places left vacant by the removal of the driver was given to Hunoomaun, who the same week received the crowning reward of his strategy in taking home Ramdoolah as his wife. Drummond had thoughts of offering the other post to Dilloo; but, on consideration, changed his mind.

“This fellow Dilloo,” he said, “is an honest dog enough, and I shouldn’t wonder if Pete deserved all he got from him. But

the man is a deal too honest and too clever : he has too much influence ; and he's like that boy Craig, with sentimental notions of right and wrong, utterly inapplicable in our circumstances here. I mean to do him a good turn in some other way ; but that nigger, Johnson, is a big, able fellow : I'll make him the driver.''

Drummond sent for Dilloo, and complimented him very highly on his brave conduct. He gave him then and there a certificate of free pasturage for all his cows on one of the squares of estate grass, and he promised him a silver medal to be worn in commemoration of his bravery and faithfulness.

To the manager's surprise, Dilloo very quietly declined the offer. He had heard of Hunoomaun's appointment to a post

which he deemed to be due to *him*; he was annoyed at the manager's breach of faith in creating the vacancies; moreover, he was alarmed by Hunoomaun's promotion to a position in which he knew that that wily enemy would manage to make him feel his power: of this, however, he said nothing to the manager, who was naturally ignorant of the causes of enmity that were at work between the two men.

"Massa, me no take dis. Dilloo plenty money, plenty grass. No wanty money 'cos beat Coolie for massa."

"What: no take grass for nossing? Don't be a fool!"

"No: no take grass."

"Well," cried Drummond, in high dudgeon, "you Indians are the most difficult animals to manage I ever knew!"

(*sotto voce*) There's something behind this, I'm sure. Why not take it, Dilloo?"

The Hindoo shrugged his shoulders.

"Massa cheat um Coolie. Tell Dilloo, tell Coolie, no punis for row: den punis Rambux, punis Dos Mahommed. All Coolie no like dat. 'Dilloo,' say Coolie, 'Manahee ebery time talkee true, dis time tell lie.'"

Drummond forthwith worked himself into a passion. He told Dilloo, very distinctly, that he thought him a cantankerous rascal, that he had not intended to let off mutinous drivers, and that, if he didn't look out himself, he would be sent to Massaruni. And so poor Dilloo went away to his house in disgrace.

Chester the overseer was present at this interview, and took notice of its result. He

was a fellow who could nurse his revenge very closely. Dilloo's dark eye gleamed fiercely on him a moment before he departed, and the overseer had been unable to check the rush of blood to his cheeks.

“That man, sir,” said he to Drummond, as soon as Dilloo was quite out of hearing, “will always give us trouble : he needs disciplining. The Coolies think too much of him, and he thinks too much of himself. It would not be a bad idea to take an opportunity to put him under that big fellow Hunoomaun, who was a peon, or watchman, or something of the sort in his own country, and, I believe, came from the same village as this man.”

“Oh !” said Drummond, quickly, “that's it, is it ? You may depend upon it, then, Dilloo is jealous of the other's promotion.

Just like those cursed Asiatics ! And that's the reason of this hoity-toity, no doubt. Yes, you're right : the best way of taking him down will be to put him under Hunoomaun, and give him a few weeks of bush-cutting. I'm sorry he won't let me be kind to him : and his wife there is as big a fool as he is."

Chester was delighted. He had charge of the back gangs of which Hunoomaun's was one. Dilloo was in a fair way to get some recompense at last for the overseer's broken skin and wounded dignity. The very next week Dilloo was removed from trench-digging, his favourite work, and ordered to join Hunoomaun's gang at the back, to cut the year's growth of weed and brush (a very formidable vegetable indeed in that climate and soil), on some

of the fallow fields of the estate. The price paid for this work enabled the labourer to make only two-thirds of the weekly profit he could have secured at trench-digging. It can easily be imagined what a volcano raged in the Indian's bosom, when he found himself degraded in the eyes of his countrymen, subjected to the surveillance and orders of a man whom he not only hated but despised, and obliged to walk nearly seven miles a day to and from his work.

For such methods of punishment and actual injustice as these no law does or can provide a remedy. It is necessarily inherent in any system of bond-service that the sole discretion as to the nature of the work to be done by his servants must be vested in the master. The only check upon him will be the interest he has in the

value of the men's labour. Even though a Coolie may be capable of doing the highest class of work, he must,—unlike the free Negro, who has his option, and very decidedly exercises it,—be liable at the whim of his master, or even through the ill-will of an overseer or driver, to be sent to the hardest, least remunerative, and most distant labour on the estate. In the prosecution of revengeful feeling, or of illicit ends, or even in the otherwise legitimate discipline of an estate, such a power, vested as it is in irresponsible hands, must always be dangerous to the peace of the community, as well as to justice and freedom.

For the time, the lesson in self-control Dilloo had recently learned stood him in good stead. He did his work stolidly, but

effectively. On the other hand, Hunoo-maun was too cunning to take immediate advantage of his triumph. He was unwilling to raise a sleeping demon; and besides, he had, through his wily wife, acquired some hints of matters which might give him yet more importance with Drummond, and assure him of a more complete victory over his rival.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CONSPIRATORS.

DILLOO, having done his day's work, was one evening sitting at the door of his hut, mending a drag-net, of the sort used by the immigrants to drag the canals, whereof every nook and outlet swarms with fish. It was past seven o'clock. There was just light enough to enable him to see his work. He was thinking that it was time for Lutchmee to come home to him. He was free to visit her when he pleased, but his native jealousy had been rather roused at seeing the attention paid by her to the

young overseer. He had full faith in Lutchmee's honour; though experience had given him little in that of any white man. Craig was a favourite among the Coolies. He never gave them a harsh word, and had been true to them at the magistrate's court, in giving his evidence,—a trait that was as ill-appreciated by the manager as it was valued by the people. Yet Dilloo, ruminating on all that had happened, feeling he no longer owed any special kindness to the estate authorities, and that his wife might not now be safe from molestation, resolved that he would endeavour to get her away from the manager's house. As these things were passing through his mind he suddenly became aware of a figure within a few feet of him, and, looking up, he saw Akaloo,

who had approached with the silent and gentle tread of his race.

“Salaam, Akaloo!” said the netter, briskly.

“Salaam, Dilloo!” replied the other, almost in a whisper; “don’t utter my name again. I do not want to be known. I have come to see you privately, on the great business. Step into your house and I will follow.”

Dilloo noticed that Akaloo’s face was partially concealed by a light cotton scarf, which he had pulled over his head. This, as soon as he had drawn back to a corner of the interior where at that time it was almost dark, he removed.

“Can anyone overhear us?” said he.

“No fear,” replied Dilloo. “This is outside the village, and I do not think any-

one would be prying about my house. Lutchmee is not at home."

But noticing that his visitor was still slightly reserved, Dilloo rose and carefully scanned the neighbourhood of his hut. Then he returned and sat down between the other and the door.

"There is no one about. The village is quiet. They are killing a kid to-night. What news have you?"

"Much," replied the pedler. "I have just returned from a journey up as far as the Arabian coast. I have been to Waakenham, to the West Coast. Everywhere the Coolies are discontented and ready for anything. They are joining the league in large numbers. They complain of everything. First, they are forced out of their beds to work in the morning."

“Many of them need it,” said Dilloo, grimly. “Half of the men on the estates do the work for the other half. Why, you have only to look at them. They are good for nothing—the scum of India.”

“True,” said Akaloo. “But that is not their fault. It is the fault of these greedy Ingleses themselves. They want to get their work done cheap, and so they collect for their service the vilest and worst of our country people. Yet when they have brought them here they have no right to treat them badly.”

“Well, I admit it’s often very hard for masters to work with the sort of fellows you get here,” replied Dilloo.

“Then, again,” said the other, not noticing this remark, “they say the overseers and drivers cheat them in taking down their

work, and get up disputes at the pay-table on Saturday about the way in which the work was done, when of course it is too late to have it examined. On some estates there are fines and stoppages of money every week, though that is against the law. If they go to Goody office* to complain, they are arrested on the way by the police, and sometimes punished as deserters; at all events are locked up in one of those filthy police stations till the magistrate comes round. Even if they do get to Goody office, and Massa Goody makes inquiry, the sub-agents will believe the manager and overseers before the Indians. The managers pocket the money they cheat the people out of, and they do not give half the hospital supplies. Medicines, food, sheets,

* The office of the Immigration Agent-General, Mr. Goodeve.

beds, they cheat in everything. Two men went out of Porto-Bello Hospital the other day, and hanged themselves. They were Chinese, and I was told by one of their matties that, though they were suffering from terrible ulcers, they were given nothing to eat but rice and a little bad biscuit."

Dilloo shrugged his shoulders.

"Many of these fellows who complain of the hospitals live like dogs at home," he said. "They get very particular when they come here."

"So they ought to be," said Akaloo. "They are promised everything better here, and how bitterly they are disappointed!"

"We have a good hospital on this estate," Dilloo replied; "but I do not believe they ever give us what the doctor orders. I

should like to see Missa Nina send fowls to a sick woman without special orders from Massa Drummon,' and he only gives those when the patient is so ill his case is hopeless. On the next estate they treat the poor people abominably. The sick people rose and thrashed the nurse there last week, and they will be taken before the magistrate to-morrow. Every one knows *the list** is simply a cheat everywhere."

* The *diet list* of the hospitals, prescribed by law, and which is hung up in English and Hindustani, for the professed purpose of enabling the people (who cannot read) to check the diet. The doctor is obliged to chalk on a black board over each patient's bed the prescription he orders him, and the diet, according to the Government list. The *menu* is altogether too good to be believed in, or ever supplied. It however serves, or did serve, the purpose of deluding the Home and the Indian Governments, and of supplying arguments in the English newspapers against busybody philanthropists. How can any employer be accused of cruelty when curried fowl and the best boiled rice are daily dainties of the sick room?

“Well,” said Akaloo, “I have seen Massa Gonzales, the Portugee. He has great sympathy with us.”

“I do not trust those men,” interrupted the other. “They make a good deal of money out of our people.”

“Perhaps I should not trust him either,” replied Akaloo ; “but he has a spite against the Government. They have put his liquor licences so high he can scarcely make any money. Besides, he seems a kind-hearted man. I know several good things he has done to our countrymen. The planters all hate him very thoroughly. He has had a petition secretly drawn up by a trustworthy person, a lawyer, Mr. Williams. It cost twenty dollars. See, it has the marks of nearly nine hundred Coolies.”

The Madrassee unrolled a long paper, which had been concealed in his bosom, but it was too dark to distinguish anything.

“ You must keep this paper, which contains the petition, separate from the signatures, in case of accident or treachery. It can be attached afterwards. All those people who have signed are members of our association. I have brought you, also, some paper for more signatures or marks. Dalhoo is a good scholar, and he is one of your safest men. Get him to put down the Indian names, and Kung-a-lee, the Chinese doctor, will circulate it among his people. He is one of our principal friends, you know.”

Dilloo nodded. He rolled up the scrolls separately, and hid them in different parts of the hut. The petition itself was placed

where, as we have seen before, he kept his sharpened cutlass.

“You may leave it to me,” he said, “to manage matters in this neighbourhood. Did you hear of the riot at this place the other day?”

The other nodded assent.

“I helped the manager that time, because our people were in the wrong. That scoundrel, Chin-a-foo the gambler, was not worth fighting for, and he has ruined some of our best men.”

“Ah, poor Achattu!” said Akaloo, “he was at one time the richest Coolie in the country.”

“Yes, until you took his place,” replied Dilloo, with a touch of satirical bitterness. “You live out of our skins.”

“I don’t get much out of yours,” retorted

the adroit Madrassee, good-humouredly. He never quarrelled with anybody. "If they were all like you, I should have to work instead of lending money. As it is, I wish to do all I can for my countrymen."

"You are a good man, Akaloo. You must take care the planters do not catch you. Trust only a very few persons. But I was going to tell you something which has happened. There is a villain named Hunoomaun, a chokedar from my village—a coward, a rascal, a beast, a reptile, a snake, a carrion-crow, a——"

"Hold, Dilloo, what a rage you are in!" cried the other, laughing.

"Ah! I wish I had him here," said the other excitedly. "I would choke him—I would chuck him—I would chop him—" and the nervous movement of his

body convinced Akaloo, who could not see his face, that he was in earnest.

“Why, what has he done to you? You should not quarrel among yourselves. I heard only to-day that he has been made a sirdar.”

“Cursed be his head, cursed be his feet——”

“And his nose, and his eyes, and his mouth, and his tongue, his father and his mother, and so on,” cried Akaloo, interrupting. “Let us take everything for granted, what then?”

Dilloo gave a rapid and vehement account of all his relations with Hunoomaun, and of the latter’s wickedness to his wife.

“Plague on the coward! He pretended to help us at the last moment, though I admit he fought well when he did begin.

And the manager has made him a sirdar, and, would you believe it, not only am I not made a sirdar, but I have been degraded, and am sent out to the back with the brush-cutting gang, under that filthy——”

At this instant the little light that was left of the evening was completely intercepted by a large body which presented itself in the doorway. Akaloo drew the scarf over his face, though in the dusk it would have been impossible to distinguish him.

A gruff voice called “Dilloo!” It was the voice of Hunoomaun.

“What, in the name of all demons, do you want here?” cried Dilloo, fiercely leaping to his feet and pushing the sirdar several feet from the door.

"I came," said the other, as soon as he had recovered from this vehement reception, "by order of Massa Chesta to tell you to be up to-morrow morning at four, as the back-dam has given way, and my gang is to go in and mend it. I'll pay you for this blow, my good fellow, some other time. I have a long score against you."

"Very well. Get out of my doorway, and don't come here eavesdropping."

"Oho! have you got someone inside, and it is not Lutchmee?"

"Get away, I tell you!"

And Dilloo made a bound towards the chokedar, who fairly turned heel and ran away. He was not going to try a fall with his antagonist on equal terms.

Akaloo shook his head.

"This is bad work," said he. "That

man, if he gets wind of our undertaking, will ruin us on your account. I doubt not he is a clever fellow. I must be off before he turns round to watch whom you have with you."

"Stay," said Dilloo, hastily unfastening a bamboo slot in the roof, and pushing out a square of the thatch, which he had ingeniously constructed as a secret trap out of the back of his house. "You can get out by the third turning to the dam on Hofman's Lust, and then you are safe."

As soon as his friend had gone, and he had refastened the trap, Dilloo walked out of the door of his house, in the direction taken by Hunoomaun, and, keeping a sharp look-out, he soon observed a figure hovering about a house a couple of hundred yards from his own. Dilloo made sure

this was the peon, and, dashing rather noisily into the canal, he gained the other side, and made up a side dam. His *ruse* was successful. Hunoomaun took this to be the stranger who had been visiting Dilloo, and he was determined to discover who he or she was. But Dilloo was too quick, and better acquainted with the estate than his pursuer. He took a good round outside the fields of growing canes, and then, seeing Hunoomaun still followed, he splashed into the canal again a long way up, as if to cross it. In fact, however, he quietly swam down under the water for some distance, and while Hunoomaun passed through and continued the pursuit on the other side towards the next estate, Dilloo, slipping out of the canal, reached his home unobserved.

CHAPTER XXIII.

QUAINT RIVALRY.

ISABEL MARSTON had no sooner attained, with a favouring fortune quite exceptional in love affairs, to the possibility of realizing her wishes, than she began to feel the embarrassment of success. Her father was equally unimaginate and unpractical. No man either of sense or of sensibility would have thought of exposing his daughter to an association which might be perilous to her affections in a way directly inconsistent with his wishes. She, when she came to reflect upon the astonishing proposal which had at

the moment so delighted her, could not help feeling a doubt about the propriety of taking advantage of it. It was impossible any longer to blind herself to the fact that, whether from the sheer emptiness of her own heart, or from the essential worthiness of the object, she was quite, perhaps irretrievably, in love with the young Scotchman. If parents will not provide other funds of amusement or occupation for their daughters, they must expect them to take the slightest opportunities of investing their affections, even upon a liability that is limited. For the young girl, there was at the time, probably, among the two thousand Europeans in the colony, no other person upon whom she might with equal propriety have settled her thoughts in trying to relieve the monotony of her life.

The critical word "duty," which the magistrate had unadvisedly employed in relation to his proposal, that she should undertake a charitable service for the sick youth, finally removed Isabel's scruples. A man will commit a murder if you can convince him it is his duty to do so. A woman in the name of duty will risk her good name. The casuistry which depends upon terms, with too little regard to their applicability, is often more perilous than any other of the subtle perversities of conscience!

So, two days after the conversation with her father, Isabel, dressing herself with more care than was necessary for a charitable visit to an indifferent Scotch person, ordered Sarcophagus to accompany her in the buggy to Belle Susanne. He was compelled to forego his favourite ragged

shirt for a clean one, and to don an old white jacket of his master's, kept for special occasions. He carried in his hand some more of the jelly, which the patient was now better able to appreciate. Two messages of thanks for previous favours had reached Isabel through Nina, direct from the sick-room.

Missa Nina received the charming girl very kindly. The Creole loved to look on the clear sweet face of the magistrate's daughter, and, too simple to think of the proprieties, or of mistakes in love affairs, she was ready enough to take her humble part in bringing together a pair of such nice young persons as the overseer and Isabel.

She plumped into the gallery, where Craig was sitting propped up by the pillows Lutchmee had ingeniously arranged about him,

while the latter was fanning him gently with a big palm leaf, and said,—

“Mister Craig, there’s a young lady come to see you, and bring you some more jelly.”

Craig had been day-dreaming under the influence of the soft gales kept up by his faithful nurse, and this interruption to a very gentle flow of thought came rather abruptly.

“Miss Marston!” he exclaimed, with some surprise. “Come to see *me*, Nina? Surely there must be some mistake. Mr. Marston was here only two days ago.”

“Yes: no mistake. She’s here, Mister Craig, looking most beautiful, dressed all in white with bows of pink, hat trim——”

“Confound her hat!” said Craig, quite unconscious that every word of this conversation was distinctly audible by the subject

of it, who was in the dining-room. "I'm not fit to see a young lady just now, Nina. What's to be done? Look here, Lutchmee, collar!—necktie!—get a brush and comb, Nina. Oh, bother, everything's out of order!"

"I beg pardon, Mr. Craig," said a heavenly vision, suddenly placing itself before him. "Don't distress yourself about your appearance. You are on a sick bed, you know, and your hair can't always be kept smooth. I came over to ask how you are after your dreadful illness; and papa said he thought—I might—perhaps—be of some use in reading to you—and—and——"

She had stretched out her hand to Craig, who, looking with dazed eyes, and in a half-stupefied state, upon the lovely face before him, mechanically put out his thin white

fingers towards his visitor. Before their hands could meet, Lutchmee, who had been watching the scene with a quick, instinctive distrust, rushed forward, and taking Craig's hand in hers held it to her bosom, which panted with excitement as she turned her glowing and angry eyes towards Isabel.

"Lutchmee!" said Nina, pushing her aside, "what are you doing? Go away! Miss Bella, she's very rude,—don't mind her."

Craig's face flushed with mingled surprise and resentment at this incident, and Miss Marston's grew red with feelings not difficult for us to analyse. Lutchmee sulkily withdrew from the verandah, and for a minute there was an awkward pause. The Scotchman partially recovered himself.

"You must not mind the poor Indian

woman, Miss Marston.” (“That’s all very well,” thought the poor girl.) “She has been at my bedside all through my illness. It is very kind of you to do me the honour to come and inquire after me. I have also to thank you for several very pleasant dainties which have made my illness more bearable—though Nina is very good, and gives me many nice things,” he added, glancing at the Creole, who was evidently listening to the conversation with both her ears. “Hallo, Sarcophagus, are you there?”

The grinning Negro came forward and made a deep bow.

“Mos’ delectable to see Massa co-alessin’ so fav’rable. I’s’e ’company Missa Bella on her mission ob affection: carry de jelly for Massa Craig.”

With that Sarcophagus deposited the mould on a table, and retired upon a very decisive sign from his mistress, whose face was red with a heat that was strongly reflected in the countenance of the young overseer.

Craig was so disquieted by these untoward incidents of the visit, and Isabel was on her part so annoyed, that they found it difficult to get up any conversation. Missa Nina good-naturedly tried to draw out a few phrases, but the results were unimportant. Isabel mentioned her willingness to read for the young man, and asked him what book she should bring to begin upon; but she did it rather constrainedly, and he was too *distract* to reply. So, after a very awkward interview, the close of which Lutchmee came back to watch, Isabel rose and took her

leave. Her farewells were very abrupt, both to the patient and to Missa Nina, and the pace at which she made the horse tear along in the buggy caused Sarcophagus to distend his eyes to an enormous degree.

“The young gen’leman am berry much dislocated, Missa Bella,” he remarked unadvisedly. “You’m require to visitate dat young man berry frequen’ ’fore he ressimprocate your attenshins wid de right impropriety.”

“If you don’t hold your saucy tongue, sir, I’ll give you the whip,” she cried, vehemently.

And, indeed, it would have been a relief to Isabel if she could have vented her feelings on some one in an energetic way.

Craig’s reflections upon this visit were decidedly uncomfortable. Simple-hearted

as he was, the peculiarity of the incidents, and the broad hint of Sarcophagus, forced him to think again and again over every little detail of the interview, and to recall the bright, though confusing, presence of the fair Isabel to his mind. It was a pretty picture, spite of the background of stupid circumstances, and in the idleness of convalescence he naturally dwelt upon it. There was something flattering to his vanity as well as pleasant to his sense, in the interest she had shown for him. On the other hand, there was a counteracting influence. When the white girl had departed, Lutchmee returned to his side with tears in her eyes. He scarcely knew how to treat this manifestation of feeling. Her singular interruption during the interview with Isabel had suddenly revealed to him something

unsuspected and unthought of—or, perhaps, something which he had been half-consciously concealing from himself up to that moment, and which he would much rather have allowed to remain unexpressed.

As he had become convalescent, he had amused himself with Lutchmee's artless, pretty ways. She showed her delight at his recovery by twining her hair in the most becoming wreaths, and dressing in her gayest calicoes. She used now and then to go to her husband's house, and Dilloo would watch with pride her light springy form as she walked "with the dignified ease of the phenicopteros" from his house to that of the manager. He had several times been to the sick-room, when Craig heartily thanked him for his wife's assistance, but this was unwittingly done in a way to excite the Coolie's

suspicion. Craig put his arm affectionately on her shoulder. She was a coloured woman, and he meant nothing by the simple action. But to the other it had an unpleasant and natural significance. Something that Dilloo's quick glance detected, of the subtle understanding almost inevitably created by sick-room intercourse between any two human beings who are ordinarily agreeable and of opposite sexes, sent a pang of jealousy through his heart of which he was immediately ashamed. Did not Lutchmee, when he went away, accompany him to the garden gate, and did she not stand there looking admiringly after the fine form of her husband, as he walked off proudly, clad in his whitest muslins? Yet, as we have seen, Dilloo could not any longer suppress the wish that his wife should return

to his house, and, on the first opportunity after the scene described in the previous chapter he had told her his desire.

That little intimation was a critical point in Lutchmee's experience. It had come the day before Miss Marston's visit. The Coolie had hitherto been giving herself up to her genial toil, with a devotion which by degrees grew to an enthusiasm, as her intimacy with the manly young Briton increased. As he grew better he talked freely with her, and she prattled to him. The life was new. It brought into her life fresh human elements, feelings she had never experienced before: ideas—novel, sweet, piquant. Very pure, very simple, even very holy seemed this time to her—and yet, to the least worldly observer, how charged with peril was the

atmosphere of these halcyon days! Dilloo's sudden hint to her to prepare for her return home struck in harshly upon this contented, delightful peace. It woke her up to the fact that the agreeable season must soon close—it brought her back to common life and to her wifely duties—and, though she could not analyse the meaning of the feeling, Dilloo's request disquieted her with a conscious unpleasantness. She would rather not have been reminded by him that he had a claim on her superior to the charming engagements of her recent life. The immediate feeling passed away, but, for the first time in her experience, there had crossed her mind an idea like a shadow of regret or of resistance towards the supremacy of her husband in her heart.

Craig's generosity was rather touched by the awkward exhibition of jealousy which had marred the interview with the magistrate's daughter. He said nothing to Lutchmee about it, but he could not help recurring to it as an evidence of her liking for him. He patted her kindly on the shoulder, and told her not to cry, and in a very short time she recovered her liveliness, and things went on as before. But from that moment the poor Indian woman was conscious that he was more tender to her. Would he not have been gentler to his dog had it received a blow?

A few days after this Dilloo went to Drummond, and insisted that his wife should be sent home. The manager made no objection. He once more looked upon

Dilloo as a dangerous malcontent, a feeling Chester took care to encourage, and he did not care to cross the Coolie until he could gain a decisive advantage by it. Craig was now nearly well enough to undertake a journey to Barbadoes, to perfect his convalescence, and Lutchmee could be the more easily spared.

When she went away, Craig shook the little Indian woman warmly by the hand, while with look and voice he cordially thanked her for all her care. The act was done in a frank and manly way, and as he looked into her brimming eyes and pressed her small hand, no thought but that of honest gratitude filled his heart. But it was the moment in Craig's inward experience when the antipathy of race finally died within him; and as they

stood there hand in hand, this woman, without reference to colour or features, became to him as a fellow-being of one blood and one humanity with himself. If there be something true and noble in such a revelation to a man, may it not also bring to him new and unforeseen dangers ?

CHAPTER XXIV.

SHORT AND SAD.

ISABEL MARSTON, as we have seen, returned home from her first and last venture for Craig's entertainment in no amiable mood. Her anger was set on fire by the innocent but suspicious act of the Indian woman. It burned the more that Craig's treatment of the affair rather tended in Isabel's eyes to convict him of at least folly in his intercourse with the Hindoo. Why did he not shake her off as any gentleman ought to have done? Why should he permit her, a Coolie woman, not only to

be so familiar, but so demonstrative—and absolutely to seem to be *jealous*!—jealous of her, Isabel Marston, the white belle of Demerara! Each time this thought recurred to her mind, Isabel's heat increased, and it was dangerous for Miriam or Sarcophagus to be in the neighbourhood. Her anger was very tropical in its intensity as well as in its manifestations. Then there was that coarse and candid remark of the idiot Sarcophagus—what could have been more exasperating? To a refined girl, conscious that her heart had run away with her, how intolerably humiliating was that premature presentation of the matter in a concrete form. The walking representative of stone coffins suffered for many a day for that single misfeasance of his too ready tongue.

"Isabel," said Mr. Marston one evening, — he with his cigar, lounging after dinner in his cane chair, she lolling gracefully in the hammock, which she kept in gentle motion, — "how about young Craig? Have you been over to read to him yet?"

ISABEL (*shifting uneasily in the hammock*). No: I have been over, you know, but not to read.

MR. MARSTON. Did you see him?

ISABEL. Yes. (*Another shudder of the hammock.*)

MR. MARSTON. Well?

ISABEL. O nothing, papa. He's getting better.

MR. MARSTON. Did you offer to go occasionally and amuse him?

ISABEL. I don't know, I'm sure. He

seemed so taken up with Nina and the Coolie woman, I don't think he cared much about my visit.

MR. MARSTON. Confound his impudence ! Those Scotchmen are the coolest people in the world. Did he not even condescend to thank you for the kindness of your offer ?

ISABEL (*having vented her spite in the last sentence, and taking alarm at her father's tone*). O yes ! I only hinted at it, you know ; and I think perhaps he felt a little shy.

MR. MARSTON. Is that all ? Well, very proper for a boy in his position.

ISABEL. Yes.

MR. MARSTON. Mr. Drummond tells me he is going away.

ISABEL (*with a slight start*). Where to ?

MR. MARSTON. (*After a long puff, which tests the young lady's patience extremely.*)
Bar-ba-does.

ISABEL (*carelessly*). To recruit his health,
I suppose ?

MR. MARSTON. I don't know. I have an idea Drummond thinks him too much of a codling. Drummond likes men of strong will, and not too squeamish ; who will be faithful to the estate before all things. This young man is unlike any of the overseers, or else I should never have allowed him to come here. He is honourable, and in some respects gentlemanly, and I have noticed that in court he is very particular about the truth. In that assault case he behaved nobly, and I felt bound to congratulate him, though it made Drummond tremendously testy.

ISABEL. Then he is going to Barbadoes for good?

MR. MARSTON. Oh, I don't know anything about it; nor do I care! But I should think it likely. Why don't they bring the coffee? Do go and wake them up.

Now Isabel had been convincing herself that she did not care "one bit" for Mr. Craig, and that that gentleman might go, or act, or think, or refrain from going, or acting, or thinking, whither or how, or what he pleased, for all it mattered to her. But, in truth, when she jumped out of the hammock to hunt up the lazy Sarcophagus, her heart was going pit-a-pat in a way the reverse of indifferent. She could not define the reason why, nor did she attempt to do so; but a great shadow

of disappointment and apprehension had suddenly come over her. In fact, she did not immediately return to the verandah, but went up to her room with a bursting heart;—and—yes, miss, it must be told—threw herself down on the bed and cried very heartily.

CHAPTER XXV.

PLOTING.

WHEN Craig had gone, and could not even be inquired after, Lutchmee for a short time felt very keenly the change of life from the sick-room to her own home. But her real love for Dilloo, and his delight at her return, his grave but more marked fondness, soon restored her to her old contentment. She was able to do much for her husband in preparing his meals, or in assisting to tend the cows. As Dilloo found himself becoming more deeply involved in the plot which Akaloo

was hatching, and at the same time was daily more sensitive to the intolerable supremacy of Hunoomaun, his heart turned with greater passion towards the only being whom he loved and trusted, and his jealous watchfulness over her grew proportionately more strict.

It was now necessary that the Indian wife should take her part in the labour which she was indentured to perform on the estate. Drummond would have scorned to exhibit towards her any direct ill-will, but he did not put himself to the trouble he was wont to take for his favourites, to look after her destination as a labourer. His misunderstanding of Dilloo's character led him to look upon the Coolie with increased suspicion.

It is inevitable that in the anomalous

artificial relations created under the labour laws of Coolie colonies, a labourer's cleverness or independence should excite suspicion oftener than confidence in the mind of his master. What would be your disquietude were one of your horses to begin to display an intelligent apprehension of his rights and wrongs? To the employer the ideally perfect conditions of such systems of labour must be absolute subservience and narrow intelligence on the part of the employed. The complaint that education or ability may make a man too clever for his work, comes not only from English farmers or from noble Marquises in a House of Peers, it has its special grounds wherever slavery, or any modification of slavery, is the order of labour. Equality of rights or of ability in a bond-

servant is as irrecognisable as equality of position. In judging of the system this should never be forgotten; it is the key to many of its delicate and most difficult problems. Such a system can only be endured by any right-minded man as an interval of pupilage for better things, and can only avoid condemnation in proportion as it proves itself to serve that end. In that view it may be made, with wisdom, forbearance, and the most rigid oversight conscientiously enforced by a strong Government, a means of incalculable good; but only the most ignoble avarice would desire it to be protracted beyond the shortest possible period of duration. Hence the question for the present and the future is, how to secure for the Coolie the maximum of the benefits of the system

by which alone he can be brought to the possibility of better prospects and advantages; meanwhile reducing to the very least the necessary restraints or inevitable disabilities of his half-bondaged state. This is the state which it is the natural interest of the planters to prolong,—the policy of humanity and statesmanship to shorten.

Drummond then, finding both his servants to be too-clever-by-half, took no pains about either Dilloo or Lutchmee. He left it to the overseers to assign them their tasks. It is a horrible fact, which we would not again unnecessarily refer to, that the Hindoo wife was exposed to the rival advances of two or three overseers, and that her simple and determined virtue subjected her to the animosity which they

were, without fear of censure or discovery, free to carry into action against both her and her husband. Martinho, the Portuguese, was the most resentful of these libertines. He had an inkling from Ramdoolah of the state of affairs between Hunoomaun and the too independent pair. Lutchmee was, by his direction, on the ground of laziness in the megass-yard,—a laziness due to a cause which ought to have appealed to any manly sympathy,—sent out with the weeding-gang to the back of the plantation. She patiently bore up against the additional strain thus put upon her. It was work she had never done, and in her condition especially painful; but her husband was working not far from her. She walked by his side the long distance to and from their tasks, and

sometimes of an afternoon, when the day's labour was finished, they would lounge under the bamboos at the back-dam, or she would rest in the shade while he penetrated the jungle in search of birds or iguanas.

Lutchmee's quick apprehension discerned that her husband was daily growing more reserved and gloomy. He showed her no unkindness,—nay, he seemed more tender in his treatment of her, but he talked little, and frequently absented himself without giving her any information of the object. She noticed that at the back-dam he often wandered away over the bounds of the adjacent estates; and two or three times she saw that men from those estates, who seemed to have met him casually, engaged with him in long and earnest

conversations. It was unusual for so many persons to frequent the back-dams, and Lutchmee began to have a suspicion that Dilloo was engaged in some perilous plot. She asked him about it.

“Dilloo, why do so many people come and talk to you out here?” she said one evening to him. “That was Akaloo who was with you just now under the bamboos.”

“Hush!” said Dilloo, looking round cautiously. “Don’t mention any names in talking out here. We are never safe.”

“Why not, dear Dilloo?” said Lutchmee, putting her soft hand on his shoulder. “Surely there can be no harm in mentioning the names of our acquaintances. Why should you have any fear?”

“Oh, I don’t mean everybody! I mean

—the one you mentioned. Don't speak of any one you ever recognise out here!"

"What can be going on? I am certain you are doing something with these men which is secret, perhaps dangerous. Why do you not tell me about it? You can trust me,—you used to trust me."

"Lutchmee, darling," said the man, "you are young and a woman. I trust you as ever with all my own secrets, but this is not my own, it belongs to hundreds of people—to all Coolies."

"Then it belongs to me!" interrupted his wife.

"Yes, some of it does. But it would have been better had you never suspected or known anything of it. I wanted to keep you safe, whatever might happen to me."

"Oh, Dilloo, are you in any danger?"

“We are engaged in a great plot. Coolies on every estate are pledged to it. At first we are going to act peaceably and demand justice from the great Sahib, the Governor. If he will not give it to us, then——” he stopped, and significantly made a grimace. “Anything is better than this. Every day Hunoomaun is more ferocious to me. He cheats me every week in setting down my work. And you, my poor Lutchmee, in your present state you cannot long endure the stooping labour you have to do. This shall stop—*this shall stop!*”——and leaping to his feet he fiercely stretched out his arms and cursed the Government, the officials, and the people who had brought them to their present position. In the act a piece of blue paper dropped out of his babba.

Lutchmee picked it up. It was foolscap, and contained both printing and writing. She, of course, could not read it: it was in English.

“What is this?” she said.

“That? Oh, I did not want to trouble you about it! It is a summons to the Mahitee’s court for to-morrow.”

“What for?”

“For absenting myself from work on Friday last.”

“Why I thought you were at work all day.”

“No. I had to go a long distance to another estate on an important matter.”

“That you have been speaking of?”

He nodded.

“Will they fine you?”

“No. I had done five tasks, and Akaloo

says I am not bound by the law to work five days if I do five tasks. But the overseer says I am bound to perform my tasks on five succeeding days. He knows I work fast, and wants to get more out of me."

"I hope the Mahitee will not send you to prison?"

"No fear. He will fine me if he punishes me at all. Am I not the best workman on the estate?"

"They have a spite against you. They will do all they can to hurt you. I will go with you to Mahitee's court to-morrow."

"Oh, you must not do that. You have not done five tasks this week, and they may summon *you*."

"Well, I shall run the risk."

They went to the canal, where there was floating a raft of brushwood which Dilloo

had recently made for his wife, now within a few months of her confinement. As a rule, women in that condition were very kindly treated on Drummond's estate. They were allowed to rest from work, and to lounge and feed, if they pleased, in the hospital. But Lutchmee and her husband had forfeited the manager's regard, and he left them to the overseers, who of course might or might not carry out the usual practice of the estate. Ramdoolah had been brought into requisition by Hunoomaun, and she assured Chester, who was willing enough to believe it, that there was nothing the matter with Lutchmee, and that her indisposition was a pretence. It is so common a thing for a Coolie woman to malingering, that Chester was able the more safely to disregard his own

convictions in favour of Ramdoolah's theory.

Lutchmee sat on the raft, and Dilloo seizing a withe of grass which he attached to it, plunged into the canal, and, walking down its centre up to his shoulders, gently drew his wife the whole distance home. She laughed and clapt her hands as she watched his shining limbs, smoothly dividing the brown bush-water.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DIDACTIC.

IT is necessary, before unfolding any farther the events which befell at Belle Susanne, to refer in a rather matter-of-fact way to the condition of the Coolie labourers in British Guiana at the time which our story describes ; and to the various circumstances of injustice which had given rise among the whole Coolie population to a dangerous feeling of discontent.

The reader will already have gathered that the root of the injustice had been struck in India in the exaggerated repre-

sentations made by the native recruiters to induce the Indians to emigrate. These were bad enough, and may be found to be unavoidable in circumstances where so much is left to depend on the statements of irresponsible and unconscientious Hindoos. The Indian magistrates, who were bound by law to make a personal examination of the intending emigrants, and might by conversation have informed the applicants what were the real terms and meaning of their contracts, sometimes did not see the people except in the distance and as a body, or if they did, were unable to give the time necessary for a proper examination. At the Hooghly depôt, the emigrants were treated very much like a flock of sheep, being looked at, verified, and counted, it is true, but without proper regard to the question

whether or no they distinctly understood the terms of their undertaking. Hence it was not until he landed in Demerara, and came in contact with the Immigration Agent-General, that the Coolie began to surmise what were his engagements in the estimation of his employers; and never until he was fairly upon the estate, and in communication with older immigrants, did he discover that he was the subject of penal laws of a peculiarly harsh and stringent character. The inequality and injustice of the "Masters and Servants Act" in England was reproduced with aggravated incidents in the case of men who in no circumstances were free to change their masters for five years at a stretch. While the Coolie, for any breach of his contract (*e.g.*, not performing five tasks a week, or

for damages not wilful), was liable to either fine or imprisonment in the discretion of the magistrate, there was no breach of the labour law, however gross—such for instance as the non-payment of the wages on which the men's living depended, or such neglect of a doctor's orders in hospital as might affect a patient's health for life—which subjected the master to imprisonment. This was the more glaring because there was open an alternative and quite sufficient mode of punishment, which was actually made a supplementary one; for not only was a Coolie punished by imprisonment, but he was liable in addition to have the period of that imprisonment added to his five years at the end of his indenture, and was thus practically obliged to suffer twice over for the same offence. Had the

magistrates in inflicting their penalties duly considered this, it would not have mattered. But the punishments they imposed were often intolerably heavy.

It is right also to mention, as another instance of the normal state of conscience of legislators and administrators in such colonies, that the law was so worded as to afford an excuse for a gross injustice. Though the law was clearly intended to permit an emigrant to perform, in succession, the whole of the maximum number of tasks of labour that could be exacted in a week, and then for the remaining days to be at liberty to dispose of his time as he pleased, the magistrates held that he was bound to perform a certain number of tasks on a certain number of succeeding days in the week; and hence a man, who had by the Wednes-

day really performed his legal week's work, was, if he absented himself on the Thursday, brought up and punished with imprisonment.

Again, there were on the part of many managers those other wrongs which were specified by the Portuguese, and by Akaloo in his conversation with Dilloo. Stoppages at the Saturday pay-table for alleged neglect in tasks that had been finished days before, and without notice to the supposed defaulter at the time of his default, preferred too late for any reference to arbitration, were subjects of rancorous discontent on several estates. On others, illegal fines were levied; and on almost every estate such instances of personal wrong inflicted by managers or overseers or drivers, as have been disclosed by the incidents of

this tale, gave rise to the indignant sympathy of the little immigrant communities, and aroused very serious disaffection.

Not only did a Coolie suffer such petty injustices while actually indentured, but at the termination of his service, when he was discharged from his engagement, he found that the law had ingeniously surrounded him with conditions invented to drive him to reindenture himself for another five years. There was no provision for a shorter term of service. He was tempted by the offer of the fifty dollars bounty-money in cash. The law obliged him, if he wished to be free, to take out a certificate, for which he paid a couple of months' wages, and to carry about this certificate always on his person. It was taken for granted that every immigrant who was found on the roads

walking about free was a deserter, unless he could produce this certificate of his discharge. If he had perchance left it at home, he was liable to be locked up at the police-station until he could prove himself a freeman. In one Coolie colony, that of Mauritius, where the immense number of immigrants renders it the more difficult to identify them, an ordinance was passed ordering that a photograph of the free Coolie should be attached to his certificate, for which he was charged the value of a month's labour! It was alleged that the photographer who succeeded to the benefit of this infamous piece of jobbery realized by it a large sum of money. Spite even of this precaution, constant instances of illegal detention, under the vicious activity of the police, made the lives of freemen so mise-

nable that indentureship became a preferable resource to freedom—a consummation devoutly to be forwarded in the interest of the planters. Did a man, although carrying the certificate, go from one district to another without previously obtaining a *visé* from the magistrate, he was subject to arrest and to detention in horrible dens.

In addition to these, there were other subjects of complaint, arising out of the difficulty of fixing a standard of wages satisfactory to the Coolies. They were, according to the law, to be paid at the same rate as the free Negroes in their own neighbourhood, a standard which clever managers by the nature of their arrangements with the Negroes could easily render inapplicable, and which in the case of a large number of estates in islands or sequestered places

could never be applied, because there were no Negroes employed in the vicinity.

No one can be surprised that these things had excited to a high pitch the ill-feeling of the whole immigrant community. At the same time Blacks and Portuguese were dissatisfied with the incidence of taxation; so that altogether British Guiana was not for its Governor a bed of roses, though he received a salary and perquisites of more than six thousand pounds sterling a year.

Dilloo had, on his first arrival at Belle Susanne, behaved with great discretion, although his quick mind soon appreciated the evils and the wrongs of the system of which he was a victim. He saw that many of his countrymen were good-for-nothing people; while, on the other hand, not a few had, by application and thrift, been

able to amass respectable sums of money. He invested his own bounty-money in a cow, and worked with assiduity to earn as much wages as any of his fellows. But his sympathy was aroused by the wrongs of which he was a constant witness, and was still more keen when he found that the magistrate's court did not afford redress for them. The stipendiaries seemed to the Coolies to think that it was their duty to administer the law in the interest of the planters: they disbelieved Coolie evidence, and placed undue reliance on that of the employers. In fact, they so far encouraged the notion that to bring an immigrant before them was to convict him, that in one instance a manager was extremely indignant with a magistrate who remonstrated on finding that an overseer had been deli-

berately sent to testify in a case knowing nothing whatever of the subject of inquiry ! In Dilloo's mind the sight of these wrongs inflicted on his weaker countrymen aroused as much indignation as did his own disappointment. The Indian's ideas of ethics were, no doubt, vague and distorted ; but he had much nobility of character, his sentiments were usually generous, and, with all his native education in cunning and deceit, he was inclined to the side of truth and honour. When his ability forced him to a leading place among the immigrants of his estate, he candidly manifested his feelings, much, as we have seen, to the injury of his good-standing with his superiors.

He again and again acted as spokesman for his brethren when they had complaints to make to Drummond ; and this gave the

manager the impression that the Hindoo was a firebrand. His evil character culminated in the event which led to his imprisonment.

The incident arose in this way. A man, named "Rambux No. 2," had been appointed stable-boy to Simon Pety. Rambux No. 2 was a weakly fellow from the streets of Calcutta, quite equal, however, to the amount of light work involved in his appointment. He spent most of the day lounging about the stables, which sheltered from the night-air and the vampire bats the horses of the manager and the mules of the overseers. The saddles and bridles of the latter rarely received any other attention than that of the cobbler at Guineatown; and, with the exception of Mr. Drummond's harness and buggy, the general plant of these stables was of a primitive sort. However, Simon

Pety naturally wanted to put the maximum of work on the shoulders of Rambux No. 2, and Rambux No. 2 reciprocated by desiring to do the minimum of work for Simon Pety, —a diversity of operations which brought about anything but one spirit.

Another thing led to discrepancies of opinion. Rambux No. 2, a dark, hill Koord, was a hideous idolater. He had a baked clay idol in his house. When a kid was killed, he performed curious rites with its blood. He had weird and terrible notions about the devil.

Simon Pety would talk to a cocoa-nut tree, or to himself, in the absence of an intelligent audience, in direct controversion of the Duchess of Newcastle's aphorism, that "conversation requires witty opposites." Any answer or no answer would satisfy

Simon Pety. Rambux No. 2 was one of his butts. He took it into his head that he ought to try to convert Rambux No. 2 to Christianity—that is, to his own ideas of it.

“You heathen, Rambux,” he said one day. “Sabby you go to hell, sure as you’m born.”

“Iss,” replied Rambux No. 2, showing his black teeth, and testifying a thorough enjoyment of the prospect: “me sabby—all right.”

“Debbil take you—eat you—scrunch you so,” persisted Simon Pety, illustrating his metaphor by biting a piece of sugar-cane and grinding it between his teeth.

“Iss, iss. Oh good—debbil!” replied the other, with a delighted face. “Pray, debbil, eat um so.”

“You’m great sinna! No pray debbil!

pray God—God lub 'im—Christ, too, lub 'im—die for 'im—save 'im soul from debbil ! Rambux no lub Christ?"

" No : Rambux no sabby 'im—lub debbil. O too much lub debbil ! "

The Indian took a small, dirty, rather crudely-formed image from the string round his neck, and, placing it on the ground, made a profound salaam—went on his knees, and finally on his face, flat before the piece of clay. Simon Pety did not conceal his disgust and horror. He expressed it in an energetic way—the spirit of the old Reformers was in his heart. Taking down a raw-hide used for the mules, he gave Rambux No. 2 a cut, full of sanctified zeal, over his naked thighs, that made him start and howl to his god in a most appropriate spirit.

" Get you up, Satan ! Get away, you

'bandoned sinna ! Dat am committin' de sin 'gainst de Holy Ghos'. You'm sartin to be damned."

Simon Pety seized upon the idol and flung it a hundred feet away. It was well for the audacious iconoclast and missionary that his would-be convert was no match for him ; otherwise the wrath that blazed in the other's face would have proceeded to a very infernal manifestation of zeal on behalf of his Satanic majesty. As it was, the Koord made a rush at his instructor, and the latter gave him another cut with the whip. Forthwith Rambux No. 2 raising a great outcry, again rushed at the Negro, who knocked him down, and proceeded to lay the cowhide over the man with furious enthusiasm. Several Coolies ran to the scene, among them Dilloo. Before

Master Pety could turn round, or call for assistance, he was thrown on the ground. Fortunately for him Dilloo was not carrying his favourite lattey; but one or two others were better provided, and they belaboured the evangelist very thoroughly, while Dilloo supplemented their exertions with the whip which he wrested from Pety's hand. The row brought to the spot Martinho and Craig, who seized on Dilloo and rescued Pety from an ugly fate. The whole of the Coolies were arrested.

When the case was brought before the magistrate, Pety swore that the man, Rambux No. 2, had disobeyed his orders, and, on being "demonstrated wid very quietly," had deliberately gone for a band of Coolies, who, headed by Dilloo, came into the yard and assaulted him. This was

of course denied by Rambux No. 2 and the other Indians present. Rambux gave his version of the tale to the interpreter, who discreetly suppressed it. The practical rule of some magistrates in British Guiana, the result of sad experience, is that one Negro or white man is to be believed before twenty Coolies; and although Craig deposed, in the teeth of Martinho's evidence, that when he arrived on the scene Rambux No. 2 was lying on the ground exhausted, and—as was evident even now—much cut with a whip, Mr. Marston thought that he should hit the mean of justice by sentencing Dilloo to three months' imprisonment, and discharging the rest with a caution.

Craig's conduct in this case met with a severe reprimand from the head overseer.

“There is no use,” he said, “in letting

out too much to the magistrate. But for you, that fellow, Dilloo, would have been sent to Massaruni, and a good job for the estate."

Craig indignantly replied that he should not hold himself bound to swear in accordance with the views of any master or overseer; and, moreover, that, in his opinion, the immigrants were entitled to all that could be advanced in their favour.

"You will never do for Demerara, my fine fellow," said the planter. "These niggers are brought here to work, and you must make them do it by hook or by crook. With your squeamish views, they would soon get the whip-hand of us; and we might as well shut up shop altogether."

Drummond was very much annoyed at this circumstance, since Marston, with a capricious touch of good feeling, had spoken

in high terms of the young man's honesty, and had reflected unpleasantly on Mr. Martinho. Drummond instructed the head overseer never to call for Craig's evidence again, unless it was absolutely necessary.

"He's too particular for his place," said the manager; "but he's a shrewd, hard-working fellow. As he grows older and gets used to these people, he will see that you cannot meet their lying and cheating on fair ground, and that it is a mistake to yield them a single inch."

By such reasoning Drummond satisfied his own conscience. He chose to erect within himself a court of justice regulated by principles and administering conclusions of its own. It struck a rough balance, which might or might not be a just one, between the known chicane of the Indians

on the one hand and a reserve or perversion of truth in order to outwit that chicane on the other. Most planters are like him, and might defend themselves with considerable ingenuity in those curious tribunals set up by men called "practical," wherein actual benefits are held to be superior to abstract principles.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JUSTICE.

THE Guineatown court-house was a wooden building, surpassing the other barn-like buildings of British Guiana only in the height and thinness of the poles whereon it was supported. It lay inside a broken fence surrounding a rough grass-grown piece of ground. A very long flight of steps led to the court-room. Under these were the police-barracks and lock-ups for prisoners, places which could not be described without considerable expense to one's feelings. Round this building, at ten o'clock in the

morning of a court-day were to be seen signs of animation. A body of the black police of the colony, under the direction of an inspector and serjeant, disposed itself about and in the court. Numbers of idle blacks slouched lazily towards the place, and hung about the yard, or, as soon as they could gain admission, filled up the spaces allotted to the public. A few Coolies, also, found their way to these spaces ; but the larger number of them congregated in the yard and outside the palings, upon the dam, where they could be seen squatting in groups, men and women chatting earnestly together, many of them dressed in their bright holiday calicoes ; or sometimes eight or ten were collected in a body, soil-stained fellows, with discoloured babbas, who had all been summoned from the same estate for

some breach of the labour laws. Such groups looked moody and depressed. They were the poor and helpless ones of the flock. Frequent fines and imprisonments had made them careless of the fate that might befall them. Here and there might be seen a new Coolie, summoned for the first time, loudly and excitedly haranguing in his own behoof any who would listen to him. Now and then an overseer on mule or horseback rode up into the inclosure, where he tethered his beast, or gave it in charge to some lounging black, and joined a group of his fellows, who were discussing the cases for the day.

Martinho and Chester were in the group. By-and-by Hunoomaun, in a full suit of calico, which gave his big form a really fine appearance, came along the dam, accompanied by Ramdoolah, who walked resplen-

dent in her best finery. . There, also, approaching with slow paces, were Dilloo and Lutchmee, both handsome and well dressed, the wife meekly following her husband. As they drew near the court-house, a light-coloured Indian stepped out from a group to which he had been talking in low tones, and accosted the Bengalee.

“Salaam, Dilloo ! The lawyer cannot come to-day. I offered him the forty dollars. He has a case in the Big Court.”

Dilloo looked disappointed.

“That is bad,” said he. “Did you ask him what the law was ? ”

“Yes. He charged me ten dollars for telling me, though. He says if you had done five tasks before Thursday you were entitled to go free for the rest of the week.”

“Who will tell that to the Sahib ? ”

“ You must run your chance of that,” said Akaloo. “ You cannot speak Inglees well. You must get the interpreter to do it for you. I have seen him ; I gave him a dollar to interpret truly. I am watching to see that he does not take anything from the other side. See, there he is lying in the corner.”

While they were speaking Chester sauntered up to the interpreter, and the trio closely observed the interview. They could not hear what passed, but we can supply the report :—

CHESTER. You interpret to-day ?

INTERPRETER. Yes, massa.

CHESTER. You know a man called Dilloo, at Belle Susanne ?

INTERPRETER. Yes, massa.

CHESTER. I have a case against him. Does he know Inglees well ?

INTERPRETER. No, massa. A little only.

CHESTER. Well, see that you do not interpret for him. Do you understand?

INTERPRETER. Yes, massa. No speak Dilloo's words to Mahitee; no speak Mahitee's words to Dilloo.

CHESTER. Exactly. Nor anything his witnesses may say. I'll give you two dollars after the court is over.

He sauntered back again. Before he had reached the group of overseers from which he had emerged, Akaloo was by the side of the interpreter, and addressed him in his own language.

"The overseer has been speaking to you?"

"No: no one has spoken to me since you did."

"Yes, he has spoken to you: I saw him. He just left you."

"He spoke to another man."

"No : he spoke to you. I tell you I saw him."

"Yes : well,—he *did*."

"What did he say ?" said Akaloo.

"He only told me there were not many cases to-day," replied the man, who was so in the habit of swearing that he would tell the truth that he rarely thought about doing it.

"Did he tell you about Dilloo's case ?"

"No, not a word."

"Will you take five dollars to tell me what he said ; true,—true ?"

"Yes."

"Well, tell me."

"Give me the money first."

Akaloo was not so confiding.

"Everyone can see us here," he said.

“You can trust me; you know me well. Tell me the truth and I will give you the money.”

The man told him what had passed. Akaloo's face testified neither surprise nor disgust at the interpreter's dishonesty; the truth was he did not feel either. His business was to outwit the other side.

“Now,” he said, “listen. I will give you in all ten dollars. You must tell Mahitee so and so when Dilloo tells you. I shall be in court and can understand you, and if you do not speak as I wish,” said the Madrassee, his eyes glowing darkly as he looked the interpreter in the face, “you will be very sorry for it before three days are over.”

The scoundrel was a coward, and if the truth were put in the balance with his

life, as he well knew the other meant him to understand, there was not much doubt about his choice. There are any number of Christians who in similar circumstances would be equally conscientious.

When Akaloo acquainted Dilloo with the nature of the interview between Chester and the interpreter he was much incensed, though he had testified no anger when Akaloo told him of the negotiations on his own behalf.

These preliminaries of justice had been duly performed, and everyone was patiently waiting the arrival of the magistrate. Mr. Marston considered it more dignified to be late than punctual at his courts, and arrived half an hour after his time. He had been breakfasting with Drummond, who accompanied him in his buggy, as it was driven

in among the Coolies, many of whom were summoned from Belle Susanne. It could scarcely fail to give them all the impression that the "Mahitee" and "Manahée" thoroughly understood one another. And as a matter of fact, Drummond, who was much interested in Dilloo's case, had been entertaining Mr. Marston at breakfast with an account of Dilloo, and with his views of the immigrant's conduct. He had judiciously mingled hints of the Hindoo's ability and craft, and of the danger such a man was likely to cause to the peace of an estate. What is the advantage of his position if it does not secure a man "justice"?

The magistrate and the manager went up the long flight of steps together, and the latter, as a justice of the peace, took his

seat on the bench near the former. Here the analogy to English county justice was exact, where landlords and employers of labour may occupy seats upon the bench which is adjudicating on cases in which they are deeply interested, though they are not taking part in them. But Englishmen can understand that the arrangement tends to no prejudice of right, while to Coolies, not understanding the language of the court and full of the suspicions of Asiatics, it is inexplicable.

After the prisoners' cases had been adjudicated on, the summonses were called. A policeman shouted from the head of the steps the names and estates of the defendants as they were required. Akaloo had succeeded in getting Lutchmee a place inside the court beside himself, and they sat

there watching intently the process in every case. After a number of summonses had been disposed of, the name of Dilloo was called.

The court was not a large one. Its aspect was primitive enough, but in it was administered justice according to English forms and precedents. The panelling and appointments were all of unpainted deal. About one-third of the room was occupied by the low platform, fenced in by wooden palings, constituting the bench, in the middle of which, at a plain table, sat the Justice. The chairs near him were occupied by Mr. Drummond and the managers of Hofman's Lust and New Holland. They took no part in the examinations, but in one of the previous cases one of these gentlemen had given evidence from the bench

against a defendant. Immediately in front of the magistrate's table was a wooden pen or dock, beside which was the stand for the interpreter and witness. Behind this a space was kept clear by the police for prisoners, defendants, and witnesses. On either side, with the exception of a few seats assigned to any legal attendants at the court, or to overseers and reporters, were banks of seats crowded with representatives of the mixed population of British Guiana.

When Dilloo's name was called, all eyes looked anxiously towards the entrance. Many of the spectators knew that this was the man who had beaten Simon Pety. Pety himself had slipped upstairs, with the Christian desire to see punishment inflicted upon one against whom he had a grudge. Hunoomaun was waiting among the wit-

nesses, and Ramdoolah's black teeth grinned maliciously at Lutchmee, who, overcome by the heat and thrilling with apprehension, could scarcely keep her seat.

As the noble-looking Hindoo passed noiselessly into the court, and firmly walked forward to the box, he touched elbows with Hunoomaun. The chokedar tried to look firmly in the other's face, but his glance quailed before the fiery passion that glowed in Dilloo's eye. He drew aside, and Dilloo, stepping lightly into the box, saluted the magistrate.

Mr. Marston looked at the face and figure and dress of the Hindoo with some admiration. He had an Englishman's love for a fine man; and here was one, tinted coffee colour.

"It's a pity you should bring up such

a fine-looking fellow, Drummond," he whispered to the manager.

"Ah! He's a regular devil, though," replied the other. "I told you he was the same man who nearly killed my groom."

"Yes, the sanctimonious scoundrel! I never felt easy about that case, you know," said the magistrate, smiling.

The other smiled also, as Mr. Marston turned to his duty.

Dilloo had watched the conversation keenly. His imagination filled it with meaning.

"Where is the summons?" said the magistrate.

He looked at it.

"It is 'for absenting himself from work.' That will be under section 7 of the Ordinance 9, of 1868? Who appears to prosecute?"

"I do," said Chester, standing with his arm on the paling that environed the Justice. "The defendant absented himself on Thursday. I was the overseer. I produce my book."

"Tell the defendant the charge," said Marston to the interpreter.

The latter uttered a few words, and Dilloo nodded.

"He understands it, sir."

The overseer was then sworn, and deposed to the defendant's absence on Thursday. Hunoomaun, having been duly sworn on a glass of water, also deposed to Dilloo's truancy.

"Have you explained to the defendant what the witnesses said?" asked the magistrate of the interpreter.

"Yes, sah."

“ Does he wish to ask them any questions ? ”

“ Yes, sah. Ask Hunoomaun whether this man have not done five tasks by the night before ? ”

“ What has that to do with it ? The summons is for ‘ absence from work,’ not for non-performance of five tasks. Explain that to him.”

A long and confused colloquy ensued between the interpreter and the defendant. As the former did not comprehend the point put by the magistrate, it is no wonder that the latter never had an inkling of it.

“ Have you explained it to him ? ”

“ Yes, sah ! ”

“ Well ? ”

“ He says nothing.”

Mr. Marston looked at the section again.

“As a matter of fact,” said he, to the overseer, “had the man done five tasks by Wednesday night? Because, if he had it would be rather hard to punish him.”

Drummond made a gesture of impatience. It was seen by the magistrate, also by the defendant and by Akaloo and Lutchmee.

“Not,” replied Chester, steadily, “according to my book. I see my book only has him down for three tasks. Ask the driver, sir.” Chester had provided against this defence.

Hunoomaun, with well-feigned reluctance swore, through the interpreter, that Dilloo had only performed three tasks that week.

“I don’t mean to say that it is of any consequence to the legal bearing of the case,” said Marston, apologetically, “but it might have affected the penalty. Well,

the case seems to be proved. Ask him if he has any witnesses."

INTERPRETER. He says he has no witnesses. He says he did five shillings' work by Wednesday night.

The interpreter was keeping faith with Akaloo.

A Coolie summoned for breach of contract under the labour laws was, and while I write (two years after) still is—spite of the recommendation of a Royal Commission—treated like a criminal in England, and not suffered to give evidence in his own case. Dilloo had not expected the denial of so plain a fact as his performance of five tasks, and had brought no witnesses to prove it. Akaloo understood the position.

"Dilloo!" he called out in his own language, "ask the Mahitee to put off the

case to another day, to allow you to call witnesses to prove you had done five tasks."

"Silence!" cried the Judge and two black policemen, and all the justices in chorus.

Dilloo took the hint. He accordingly instructed the interpreter, who asked for an adjournment. Drummond whispered to the magistrate :

"It's only a *ruse*."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Mr. Marston aloud to the audience. "There's no use in encouraging the defendant to bring a lot of Coolies here to commit perjury. At all events, I am of opinion that, looking at the section, the point has nothing practically to do with the case. Ask him whether he was absent from work on Thursday."

"He says 'Yes,' sah!" •

“ Well, then, there’s nothing more to be said. The case is quite clear. I fine you ten dollars, or one month’s imprisonment. Will he pay the money ? ”

Dilloo shook his head, and gave a decided negative when he understood the question.

“ He says ‘ No,’ sah ! You not give him justice.”

“ Then remove him. Who comes next ? ”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A TREACHEROUS WOMAN.

BEFORE Dilloo had had time fully to apprehend the result of his trial, he was pulled out of the dock and hurried from the court. For the second time, in his case, British justice, drawing a bow somewhat at a venture, had made a bad shot. Lutchmee, following him down the steps, silently wept and wrung her hands. By her side went Akaloo, whose natively yellow face looked a mortified blue, though he fought with his feelings bravely. The three were allowed to remain and converse together in the yard until the court broke

up. The Indian woman sat down and rocked her body to and fro, moaning to herself, while Akaloo and Dilloo conversed in undertones.

"I shall go and complain to Massa Goody about this," said the Madrassee.

"What use?" cried Dilloo, fiercely. "Why need we bear this any longer? You see they are all alike. The Mahitee and the Manahee pull together. They pretend to give us justice in their courts, and go through the form, but never give us the reality. Massa Goody is very kind, and tries to help us, but Governor-Sahib won't let him. Do not trouble yourself any longer about the petition," he added, with clenched teeth and frowning brow. "Wait until I get out: tell the Coolies to be all ready, and then let Massa

Drummond and Massa Marston look out for their houses ! ”

“ Stay, stay; not so fast,” replied his more sagacious friend. “ You must remember the British Queen is strong, and her arm is long. If we *could* kill all the Ingleses in Guiana, she would be sure to find us out and punish us. We must put ourselves in the right, and try every fair means before we take to fighting.”

“ For my part, I wish to fight—and die ! ” said Dilloo.

Lutchmee was alarmed by his vehemence.

“ Calm yourself, my man,” she said softly, with a caressing gesture : “ we will talk of this when you are free. But, O Dilloo, tell me, what shall I do with myself while you are away ? ”

He looked at her tenderly, and his

thoughts all gathered in his eyes in a dense cloud. A lonely woman—in the hands of Drummond and his overseers—at the mercy, possibly, of Hunoomaun and Ramdoolah, with no strong arm near to protect her, and by the conditions of her indenture restrained from seeking shelter elsewhere: no one will think the less of his manliness if her husband's realizing glance at her situation overpowered him with anxiety.

“Poor Lutchmee!” he said; “you will be alone, and so soon you must ‘sit down.’* You ought not to do any more work. How is she to get on, Akaloo?”

“She must go to the doctor and get an order to stop working.”

* This is the delicate way in which the Coolies are wont to describe the approaching perils of maternity.

“Very well. Go, Lutchmee, to the hospital, and if you can, get them to allow you to stay there. You will be safer than you would be alone in the house.”

“Now,” said Akaloo gently, “I think the court is rising. One word more in your ear. The petitions must be presented at once. There are many signatures. Mr. Williams will send them to the Governor-Sahib on behalf of the Coolies. You have some of the papers at your house.”

“Yes,” replied the Bengalee; “you know where they are hidden. Go now with Lutchmee, and get them. But I tell you it is of no use. These rascals need to be waked up with knives and latties. You are obliged always to kill a

few people to make the great Inglees-Sahibs listen to any complaint."

"That may be true," replied the other with a shrug; "but," tapping his friend on the shoulder with his finger, "though it may bring about an inquiry and win better things for the Coolies, remember this—*the men who do it will be hung!* The Inglees take blood for blood, before they ask who was wrong and who was right."

Being a great people, cannot we English afford to overlook the caustic insolence of Master Akaloo?

"So be it!" replied the other grimly—the ferocity as well as the fatalism of his nature speaking plainly in the set lines of his face. At the same moment, his glance rested upon Lutchmee, who,

appalled by her husband's aspect, regarded him with eyes wide open and quivering lips. His features relaxed. Then he said softly—

“If we die, Lutchmee, we shall die together. Neither you nor I need fear death, and the Hereafter will be the same joy or sorrow to us. If we sink into Nothing we can at least know no trouble. Were it not for you I should not care to live in this cursed world any longer. Meantime, do not fear. I shall never forget I have my Lutchmee to protect. You must now go. We shall meet in a month. Farewell, my Flower!”

As they were taking leave of each other, they became conscious of the fact that two pairs of eyes were intently watching them from about half-way down the

ladder of steps. Looking up, they saw Hunoomaun and Ramdoolah, who could not conceal a malicious expression of pleasure at the painful scene.

“ Carrion ! ” screamed Dilloo, in a rage. “ Go your way. Do not stand up there and cast your foul shadows on purer and better people.”

“ Son of Satan,” replied Hunoomaun, “ save your breath. He that triumphs can afford to laugh at the beaten hound. Get to thy prison, coward, thief, beggar, imp of hell ! Thou shalt often go there again,—ay, and that baggage, thy wife, with thee ! ”

“ Peace, traitor and womanly reviler ! ” exclaimed the money-lender. “ It is unnatural for thee to be the tool and the accomplice of the injurer of thy country-

men. The curse of heaven rest for ever on thee, O traitor and dog ! ”

“ Ha ! ” screamed Hunoomaun in a voice that brought the police to the spot, and created immediate excitement among the loiterers in the yard. “ Beware, you yellow snake ! I know more than you think, and will yet be your ruin ! ”

His mouth was shut by the sable constables, and he was pushed off the steps, while Akaloo and Lutchmee made what speed they could to get to Belle Susanne.

As soon as Hunoomaun had shaken himself and recovered a little from the tempest of his wrath, he turned and threw a glance at the retreating pair. The court had risen, and the police were arranging the prisoners, among whom was Dilloo, for their walk to the gaol.

“Do you see that?” said Hunoomaun to Ramdoolah, and pointing to Lutchmee and her companion. “They are going off together. Your suspicion, my most cunning Ramdoolah, is correct. There is something in the wind. What brings Akaloo down here to-day, and why does he mix himself up so much in Dilloo’s affairs? Did you hear him in the court call out to Dilloo what to say? He is a serpent.”

“He is very rich,” replied the woman; “still I do not believe he can buy Dilloo’s wife. Dilloo is too rich himself to want to borrow money of Akaloo. And yet I’ll swear I saw him last week going towards Dilloo’s house in the dusk, and here he is again to-day. Lootah told me, too, that one day she saw him walking

from the back dam to New Holland, and soon Dilloo went after him. There is some plot going on, I am sure."

"I think so, too," replied the sirdar. "You know there was a stranger in Dilloo's house the night I went there. It was not Lutchmee. She was away at the manager's house. I am certain the men in my gang have some secret understanding with Dilloo. He has set them against me. They are as sullen as they can be."

"Look out, then, and punish them well," said the woman. "Summon one or two to every court, and take off part of their money at every pay-table. The manager will like you the better for being sharp and strict."

Ramdoolah was rather overreaching

herself here. Drummond, like every good manager, was in the habit of judging of a driver's capacity, not by the number of men he punished, but by the work he got out of them. Hunoomaun's cunning, however, was in this instance as much at fault as that of his Delilah. He resolved to pursue a policy of combat.

"See! They still go on together," said he. "Follow them, my Ramdoolah, and watch what they do. If they notice you, pretend that you have something to say to Lutchmee. Ask the price of that cow which is so handsome. Ah, what a cow! I wish we had it. We must either have it or poison it. It is the best cow on the place."

Ramdoolah parted from the sirdar, and slyly followed the Madrassee and Lutch-

mee. She saw them pass round the Negroyard and enter Dilloo's house. Then she quickened her steps. When she arrived at the side of the hut and had stopped and listened a moment, she held up her hands in horror or amazement admirably feigned, and none the less histrionic that there was nobody there to witness it. The door was closed. She could hear the low voices inside, but could not distinguish the words. It was clear that the two had gone behind the screen which divided the house into two compartments. She slipped round to the other side. Through the wattled wall she could now easily hear what the inmates were saying.

“Are these all the papers?” asked Akaloo.

“There are only two hiding-places that

I know of," replied Lutchmee, "and I have searched them both. There is nothing left but a cutlass."

"Good; I will take these with me."

"Stay, Akaloo," said Lutchmee. "Tell me what all this is about? What are you and Dilloo doing, and why does he talk secretly with many people? What takes him to the back of the estate so often? I saw him meet you there one day."

"Has he told you nothing?"

"No."

"It is the husband's right to keep his own secrets. A wife may not be foolishly curious. That which Dilloo telleth thee is his and thine; that which he hideth from thee is his only."

"Ah! yes. But, Akaloo, Akaloo! my heart is breaking! I cannot tell what it is,

but something in my bosom tells me there is danger floating in the air, and breathing in the wind, for Dilloo and for me! O Akaloo, if thou knowest anything that can calm my trembling heart, tell it to me, for I can scarcely carry this load of fear and sorrow."

Ramdoolah's face on the other side of the wattle was a picture of malignant triumph.

"Aha! my fine-faced beauty!" she said to herself, "your pride is coming down, I think. You have to confess it at last."

Forgetting herself in the enjoyment of her satisfaction, her head rustled against the dry leafy partition.

"What's that?" cried Lutchmee and Akaloo together. Ramdoolah gathered up her robe and ran as fast as her mature

figure would permit her to go. The Madrassee and Lutchmee rushed out of the hut.

“Who is it?” said he, pointing to the retreating form.

“Ramdoolah,” cried Lutchmee. “O Akaloo, if she heard us we are lost!”

“No,” replied the other coolly. “Everything which concerns the subject of our conversation will be known all over the country in a day or two. But in any case I do not think she could have heard us.”

“See,” said Lutchmee, pointing to the prints of two naked feet in the soft clay, close by the wall on the side of the hut. “She has been here.”

“So she has,” said the other. “And that is just near the spot where you and I were talking. She is truly a she-dog! If you have anything valuable about there,

bury it somewhere else. She is a thief as well as an eavesdropper."

Akaloo had by this time concealed the papers in his bosom, and now, bidding farewell to the young wife, he walked off in the direction of New Holland estate, where one Nobbeebuckus had a second batch of papers ready for him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BROWN AND WHITE.

As soon as the Madrassee, Akaloo, was out of sight, Lutchmee entered her house, closed the light door, and sat down. She drew her scarf over her head, and placing her two hands above it, remained in that attitude moaning softly to herself. She was weary, heart-sick, widowed for a while ; her husband had been wronged and sent to humiliating punishment ; and she, lonely, in a land not merely of strangers, but as she believed of oppressors, was left to the mercies of men to whose power and license there was apparently no restraint.

Thus it seemed to her, sitting there and thinking in her simple way in the darkened house. That which commonplace orators like to define as the “ægis” of British protection was as certainly over her as it is over any agricultural labourer in an English county, and perhaps quite as effectually. There was no wrong she could suffer for which English law and a parental, nay a grandmotherly Colonial office, did not theoretically provide a remedy. Unhappily to her at that moment—and few will be surprised to find her so unreasonable—the remedy and the application of it looked equally up in the clouds.

Thus she sat mourning for Dilloo and bewailing her own misery. She had been in this posture for some time, when she was startled by half a dozen short, peremptory

taps on the door, given by a switch or cane, and by the sniffing of some animal at the cracks in the walls. She knew the latter could not be one of the manager's dogs. They always had a warm reception in the village. Though alarmed, she did not move.

Again the rapping came rather more briskly than before. No answer being returned, the door was pushed open by an impatient hand. Lutchmee removed her chudder sufficiently to uncover her large eyes which she turned to the doorway, and there stood, looking at her from under a light-brown umbrella, what seemed in the lustrous tropical afternoon to be a spirit in white. The large eyes of the pale-faced beauty looked into the large eyes of the handsome Hindoo, and they recognised each

other in a moment. They had last met at Craig's bedside.

The Indian woman dropped her eyelashes, and quietly restoring the scarf to its place, went on moaning as before.

Miss Marston looked curiously round the hut. It was close and hot, and the odour of the cocoa-nut oil, with which the inmates loved to anoint themselves, came out strong and heavy. But the little place looked neat. The floor and the earthen base of the walls were daubed with chunam. On the walls were pinned three pictures, one an old coloured page of the *Illustrated London News*, representing a Christmas time at an English country place. The Elizabethan gables of a house could be seen in the distance. In the foreground was a group of children laden with sprigs of holly

and misletoe ; an old man had taken off his hat, in which they were dropping some coins, supplied, no doubt, by the comfortable-looking pair who smiled so kindly on this infants' rehearsal of charity. Behind the old man a red-cheeked girl curtseyed her thanks and Christmas greetings. The ground was white, and in the white were footprints. The great trees overhead had lost their leaves. Lutchmee had often studied with curious eyes this wonderful scene. To her it was a real fairyland. The snow, the death of vegetation, were as strange as the history and meaning of the time which gave its point to the picture. It would have been difficult for her to associate in any way with religion the scene thus portrayed. This scrap of paper, which had survived a voyage of six thousand miles

and numerous perils of a vagrant life, thus to find a resting-place on the wall of a South American hut, is a type of the many minute items of very potent influence which a high civilization scatters as seeds to the four winds of heaven, knowing not where they may fall—unable to trace their far-off fruition.

The two other pictures were small and very common prints of the Queen and Prince Albert, pasted on the wattle. A few pots neatly arranged, and a stool with bamboo legs, completed the furniture of the house so far as it could be seen from the outside.

As Lutchmee drew the calico over her face, Miss Marston's dog, one of the smaller Orinoco hounds, ran in and licked the Indian woman's naked arm. She started up with a shriek of fear, which sent the dog

quickly out of the hut, and, uncovering her face, looked angrily at Isabel, who was laughing heartily at the incident.

“What Missa look for? Why bring dog to Indian house?”

“Oh, I’m very sorry,” cried Isabel, becoming instantly serious. “The dog is quiet and meant no harm to you. Why, Lutchmee, what is the matter with you? What makes you so sad and angry? I want to speak to you: may I come in?”

Without waiting for a reply she closed her umbrella, and entering, sat down on the bamboo stool.

Lutchmee stood gazing at her less fiercely, but still with a sulky aspect. This was the lady to whom Craig had given his hand; who had caused her to be humbled in Craig’s presence. Craig was the only

white man for whom the Indian woman had ever felt a regard. Her first feeling of sympathy had gradually, as she thought of him, grown more and more into a pure and delicate esteem. Isabel's appearance to-day recalled a scene Lutchmee had often pondered over with indignation. But, what was worse, the young lady's apparition reminded her of Craig's absence from the estate at this critical period of her fortune, and filled up to the brim, if that were needful, the cup of her sorrow.

"Why Missa come?" she said, more softly.

"Sit down, Lutchmee, please. Something has happened to you. You have been crying."

"No. No cry. Nossing."

"Oh, yes, there *is* something. Please sit down. You are not well."

And Isabel, rising, put her hand gently on the woman's shoulders. After a moment's resistance Lutchmee sat down on the floor in obedience to the soft pressure, and Isabel resumed her seat.

ISABEL : What are you doing here, Lutchmee, all alone ?

LUTCHMEE : Man Dilloo gone prison.

ISABEL : Your husband gone to prison ? What for ?

LUTCHMEE : No sabby. Mahitee send um prison.

ISABEL : My father ? Then he has been doing something wrong, or he would not have been sent to prison.

LUTCHMEE : No, Dilloo good ; Mahitee bad, too bad. Dilloo all time good man.

Isabel cared very little about an Indian's opinion of her father. In fact neither he

nor she would ever have taken the trouble to find out what estimate was made of their acts by the inferior people around them, or what influence their lives were having on the lives of the hundreds among whom they dwelt. At any other time Miss Marston would have been angry at the imputation cast upon the magistrate, but just now she had come for a purpose ; and, besides, the melancholy state in which she found Lutchmee appealed to her sympathies. She said,—

“ Why should you say so ? Mahitee good,—Mahitee friend to all Coolies.”

“ No,” replied Lutchmee. “ Mahitee friend Manahee. Eat um breakfas’. Ride um buggy. Drink um rum.”

Isabel was for the moment half amused, half stung. She had never before concerned

herself specially in any way about the justice her father administered or the subjects of it. She used to look at the Coolies on the road with curiosity or aversion, accordingly as they were well or ill dressed in their picturesque costumes. They were creatures made to work for sugar-planters, or, failing that, to be adjudicated on by English justice, English justice being embodied in her father, and no doubt they deserved all they received at his instance. But here, by this poor Hindoo girl, there was suddenly suggested to Isabel's quick mind a view from the other side, and she took in immediately all that Lutchmee meant to imply. It seemed too absurd. She tried to explain to the other the commonplace principle which would be immediately advanced by any English person

who took a superficial glance of the subject, and urged by any planter who, not himself taking a superficial glance at it, knows that most outsiders, including Secretaries of State, will do so,—that English justice majestically does its work without regard to friends or friendship. But all Isabel's warmth could not shake the Indian woman's prejudice.

“No, no! Manahee friend Mahitee. Mahitee love manahee,—no love Coolie.”

Isabel gave it up. She changed the subject, and turned to the real object of her visit.

From the time when, as we have described, she had thrown herself on the bed that afternoon in a paroxysm of grief, she had felt herself hopelessly carried away on a tide of passion. Her feet could no

longer touch ground : she was swept along in a powerful current. And this metaphor, commonplace and rude as it may appear, is really the one that best illustrates her condition. She had quite lost her self-control, and was tossed about in a manner that may fairly be described as billowy. Your tropical young lady has tropical passions. The placid sedateness of cooler climes is to her mere indifference. In those hot countries love comes not on zephyr's wings, but sweeps along in hurricanes and monsoons.

In fact Miss Marston was intolerably affected. Sal volatile and red lavender had ceased to have any efficacy for her malady. She passed through all the versatile stages of unanswered and unanswerable passion. There was action

and reaction. Again and again had she dismissed the young overseer from her mind, peremptorily for ever. Again and again had the shade of that gentleman returned to control her imagination with greater vividness and more emphatic ascendancy. The unsettled term of Craig's absence made the situation all the more unendurable. Would he ever come back? Was he gone for good and all? In her anxiety to learn the truth she once more essayed to get it from her father. He was as testily indifferent as before. Indeed he coarsely and profanely hinted as an equally acceptable alternative to the poor lad's return, so far as he, Mr. Marston, cared about it, a fate reserved by popular and theological opinion for the wicked. Isabel strove to repress her impatience, but in vain. Each

day reproduced and enhanced the longings of the last. Her appetite declined. She became moody and taciturn. She swung in the hammock hour after hour, dreaming illusions. Miriam and Sarcophagus, having put their woolly heads together, came to the decision that she was very ill, and that she must be under the influence of the Obe man. They felt the full effects of her temper. The magistrate even was afforded some uncalled for reaction from the dulness of court work by fierce encounters with his daughter on the most trivial issues.

Miriam averred to Sarcophagus,—

“If dere ain’t somefin’ de matter dere’s goin’ to be. De Obe man got hold ob her sure enuf.”

“No, Miriam, not yit; but he will if de Lord don’t stop him,” said Sarcophagus,

who was always stowing away something in his vault-like interior, and at the moment happened to be consuming a roast plantain which had been well buttered by the cook. "My 'pinion it ain't Obe. De case is obvious. I see troo it de time ob de jelly.—O golly, wan't it good dat jelly! Hi! Miriam, make some more!—You see, Miriam, Miss Bella mos' sofistically infected. Donno how,—donno why; but so she be. Look'ee here, Miriam," pointing to the cook with the fragment of the roast plantain, before he consigned it to final perdition, "de Obe man in dis case is de young gen'lman oberseer ober dere at Belle Susanne. Ki! dere's where de pison come from, Miss Miriam."

"Look'ee here, Massa Sarcophagus," responded the cook, seizing a huge ladle, an

action which led the worthy to put himself in safety outside the door, "you make remarks most disrespectful to my sex, sah. Miss Bella lady ob position, never trow away her confections on obersear chap. You git away, or else I go gib you somefin to swear about, I will."

This, then, was the state of things in the magistrate's house, and of public opinion below stairs. Isabel was really at her wit's end to know what to do. She shrank from asking Mr. Drummond about his overseer, knowing how quick the planter was in taking up points. If she went to Nina, that good woman would put this and that together and proclaim her discoveries, if not on the housetops, in the verandahs of British Guiana. So, after many struggles with herself, Isabel had made up her mind

to go to Lutchmee and find out whether Craig had, before leaving, given to his gentle nurse some clue to his intentions. The idea was humiliating, but love unfortunately has a habit of forcing people into humiliating situations. Thus Miss Marston was now sitting on the bamboo stool in the Indian's hut.

"Where Massa Craig?" she said at length, blushing scarlet as she uttered the words.

"Gone Barbado," replied the other, looking curiously at Isabel.

"Massa Craig come back soon, eh?" asked Miss Marston, in as indifferent a tone as she could assume.

"No sabby. Gone dis too long time."

"Lutchmee want Massa Craig come back?" inquired Isabel.

The Indian woman opened her eyes so wide at this question that Miss Marston could not help laughing. Of course she wished Craig to come back again.

“Massa Craig no time come back,” said Isabel, tentatively.

Lutchmee looked at her earnestly. Had she been a white woman, her face would have been pallid ; as it was, it showed intense chagrin.

“Yes, yes, Massa Craig come back. Oh, he not stay all time ?” She had crept up and laid hold of Isabel’s dress and looked up anxiously into her face for an answer. Just as Isabel was about to reply, a big form darkened the doorway, and the two women glancing up together, their eyes fell on the features of the very person of whom they were speaking. Clear, bright,

and hearty, with the air of health breathing out of his smiling lips, and the light of it glancing out of his blue eyes : looking as if the rosy fingers of the sun-god had tinted his cheeks with his glowing favours, looking as if the warm wafting breezes that had borne him home had carried joy and strength upon their wings, Craig had come back again.

CHAPTER XXX.

“TO HIT THE MEAN.”

MR. MARSTON, after a long, hot and disagreeable day's work, returned home to dinner in no pleasant temper. Court-day was not seldom a day distinguished by a painful disturbance of the magistrate's equanimity. In those long sessions every mental, physical and moral quality was amply tested, in trying to swim to the truth through conflicting billows of evidence; in sitting in a suffocating court, the atmosphere of which was divided between the odour of cocoa-nut oil and

of exuding Negroes ; and in an effort to preserve an even balance between the sense of duty and the natural liking for a quiet life. But on this particular day it was clear the magistrate's temper was hopelessly off the balance.

Now Isabel's tone was, for a cause we know of, and by a rare accident, precisely the reverse. Every one who has a temper, will own how aggravating it is, when you are out of sorts, to find some one else in the most angelic humour, ready to smile at your anger, to bow to your rage, to strew flowers, as it were, before your irritated footsteps. It would have been some relief to the magistrate to find Isabel in the disposition to take him up pretty sharply, and thus enable him to set off his irritation against her ill-nature. But, lo, to the

magistrate's surprise, that contrary and never-to-be-relied-on person met him shining with beauty and good-humour, wreathed in her prettiest robe, bright with her gayest ribbons, and *riante* with her softest laughter.

After giving him a kiss, which he moodily received, she sat down and watched him, her fingers trifling lazily with a bit of tatting, her little foot, with its white gossamer-laced stocking, gently tapping the floor with the wafer sole of a thin French shoe, her head on one side, a slight colour in her cheek, a lustrous pleasure in her eye. Oh, Craig, Craig, what a sad, Scotch, hard-headed unsentimental block - you are not to see how absolutely all this combination of sweet life and pretty ornament glows and quivers there for you !

“ Why, papa,” cried the young lady at last, after regarding the magistrate with some consternation, as he searched for this and that he did not want, tumbled about his books and papers on the great table, turned in and out of the hammock, and energetically moved about in the steaming air as if the thermometer showed ten degrees below zero, and exercise were indispensable to keep up the circulation, “ what *can* have happened to-day ? There, you have made your hair a positive fright, rolling in that hammock ! Has the Court reversed another of your decisions, or is Gonzales going to bring an action against you for the money ? ”

“ Oh, no,” said the magistrate, “ nothing of that sort ; but I am thoroughly disgusted with this place.”

“But, papa, I think I have heard you make that remark before, and *I* make it very often. It is not a new idea, you know, and it cannot have been the sole cause of all this excitement.”

“What excitement, Bella?” cried the magistrate, ready to join issue on anything.

“I don’t know what you mean.”

“Well, you know, Mr. Marston, sir,” said the young lady, jumping up and pulling his whiskers, while he glared into her saucy, happy face, “for the last quarter of an hour you have been possessed,—‘possessed,’ you know,” she repeated, nodding at his frowning glance. “See Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, at the right chapter and verse; and I want to know where you picked *him* up.”

“Bella!” said the magistrate, abashed

and rather beaten by these novel tactics of the young lady, “ don’t be ridiculous. I am very much put out, and have good reason for it, too.”

“ Well, papa, then lie still in the hammock. Now here’s some Florida water, and here’s a comb ; and now I’ll wet your temples, and now I’ll comb the nasty temper away—like this.”

Under the soothing influence, the magistrate’s brow relaxed a little, but there was still a rough disturbance within his breast. Miss Marston drew it out.

“ Now what has occurred to-day ? You seem unusually flustered.”

“ Well I may be. It is a miserable existence enough for a ‘ gentleman—and—and a scholar,’ ” he said, hesitating to use the well-worn formula, but too indolent to com-

pile another—"to be obliged, day after day, to investigate the wretched details of disputes between lying immigrants and hard-fisted managers. But, confound it! these managers seem to look upon me as if I were their servant, and not the administrator for the district of Guineatown of the Queen's justice! What do you think Drummond did to-day?"

"I should be prepared to hear anything of Mr. Drummond," replied Miss Marston. "He is a strong character, the strongest about here—except, perhaps, Craig," she added to herself. "I should think if he made up his mind that a murder was necessary for the salvation of society he would do it, though he would not do it for his own direct interest, I fancy."

"Take care what you say!" said the

magistrate, holding up his finger and looking anxiously towards the door through which the Portuguese had so unexpectedly appeared. “Remember how Gonzales caught us the other day. Drummond is a very good fellow in many ways, though arbitrary by nature, and I don’t care to formulate my opinion of him. But what do you think he did to-day? He attacked me coming home about my conduct on the bench, because he thought I had said something which was too favourable to a Coolie who was up for breach of contract from Belle Susanne. I imprisoned the same man some time ago for beating a groom—he’s as fine an immigrant as I ever saw, every inch a man. Well, Drummond grumbled at me that time because I chose to deal with the case summarily, and did not send the man

up for trial, when they hoped to get him to Massaruni. I suspected that infernal psalm-singing old hypocrite Peter had provoked the attack, and resolved to give the Coolie another chance."

"Was his name Dilloo?" inquired the young lady casually.

"Yes. How did you know anything about it?"

"Perhaps you remember I told you that when I went over by your directions to read to that young overseer Craig——"

"Humph! You're always bringing up 'my directions' to you to go and read to that fellow. One would think you had a fancy for him."

It was well the magistrate's eyes were turned away from the crimson face above him.

“ It’s always the way with women,” he went on. “ If a man does do or say something in a moment of weakness or good-nature they never forget it to him. Well, what were you going to say *apropos* of that young overseer ? ”

“ Only that Mr. Craig had a woman in to nurse him, who was this very Dilloo’s wife, and to-day I happened to see her, and she is such a nice little woman, and is in great distress about her husband. She says that he has been unjustly dealt with.”

“ Of course she does ! ” cried the magistrate, uneasily turning his head, and consequently getting a twist of one of his harsh locks in Miss Isabel’s comb, which made him howl again. “ You can never get a Coolie to own to the justice of any magistrate’s decision. They lump us up with

the planters, and think the whole white population is banded together against them."

"Do you suppose it is because they think you are too friendly with the managers?"

"To be sure it is. They often say that, I am told. They seem to think one cannot be a friend out of court, and an honest man in court."

"It was something like that which I heard from the woman to-day."

"Never mind the woman. Let me finish my story. The same defendant, Dilloo, was up to-day for absence from work—one of Drummond's best hands, as he owned to me at breakfast. His defence was that he had done five tasks in three days, and was therefore free for the rest of the week. Well, though I thought and still think that is not

technically an answer, as I read the ordinance, I should deem it my duty to consider it in mitigation of punishment, because even you can see——”

“ Thank you very much, papa.”

“ That it shows the fellow had to some extent acted up to the spirit, if not to the letter, of the law. And—would you believe it?—Drummond, and Fluyschutz, and Langton were perfectly savage with me for suggesting such a thing! They said the Coolies were hard enough to manage already without having ideas put into their heads by the magistrates, and that, if we side with them on one single point, they are so cunning they will take the utmost advantage of it. The old story! By ——, if it were not impossible for you and me to live in this dreadful hole without some one to

talk to, I would break with every one of them, and do my duty straight through ! ”

“ But, papa,” said Miss Marston, dropping the comb, and coming round to the front of the magistrate, and speaking with gentle animation, “ *don’t* you do your duty straight through ? ”

“ Why—well—of course I do—or at least I think—I try to ! ” exclaimed the magistrate, forced to face his own words in a very disagreeable manner.

It was very curious that, with those very words on his lips or in his thoughts again and again, he had never put them directly to himself in the plain way in which his daughter had just presented them. They involved nothing more than the doubt he had only the moment before confessed, and

yet his self-love did not like to own the whole truth to himself.

“ You shouldn’t put it so offensively, Bella,” he went on, hardly knowing what to say. “ I do try to do my duty; but nevertheless, there is a sense of restraint which I don’t like, and which—and which, you know, seems to affect my—my—I mean, interferes with the facility of—my——”

“ You really mean, papa, that it warps your judgment ? ”

“ Well, no, my dear; not quite so strong as that,” said the magistrate, wishing the truth to be expressed to the outward ear in a more complimentary sense than that entertained by the inner man. But Miss Marston, being by nature a direct and frank young lady, was aiming at the exact representation in words of the poor magistrate’s

conscientious feelings. She was getting quite an insight into matters that had never occupied her thoughts. It would seem, that, after all, Lutchmee and the other Coolies had some ground for their suspicions.

“Now, papa, that is what you mean. And do you know what I would do? *I would do my duty straight through, and take the consequences.* You need not think of me. I can do without Mr. Drummond’s company, or Mrs. Leech’s, or those pale brown Misses Kit Kats, and the whole round of planters’ friends. You don’t care about these people really in your heart—only you don’t like to be on bad terms with any one; but just think how shocking it would be if even the smallest mistake of yours should result in an injustice to one of those Coolies.”

“ My dear,” interrupted the magistrate, “ you need not waste your sympathies on them. They are a cunning, weak, treacherous lot.”

“ Then why do you trouble yourself about what happens to them, Mr. Marston ? ” said Bella, triumphantly. “ Why are you out of sorts now at what Drummond said to you ? If Mr. Drummond or Mr. Fluysschutz said anything of that sort to me, I would soon let them know my opinion.”

“ Then I beg you will not, Miss Marston,” replied the magistrate with some severity. “ I have quite enough to do to steer my course without having it complicated by your interference.”

“ Dinner, Missa Bella ! ” said Sarco-phagus, appearing at this juncture, to the magistrate’s relief ; and rising from the

hammock, he gave his arm to his daughter.

It is unfair perhaps to take Mr. Marston behind the scenes in this way, half dressed and not in his character. He did try to do his duty, taking his ground in little matters as he had done that day ; and not seldom had he been assailed with resentful strictures by members of the planting community. It would be impossible for an English gentleman in his position to get off with any other experience. A magistrate in a colony where Coolies are employed is watched with hawks' eyes. Every indication of mercy or even of impartiality to the coloured parties to a suit is stamped as a reflection upon the character of the planter suitor on the other side, or a concession dangerous to discipline, and therefore im-

politic. As if the justice the magistrate is put there to administer can ever be impolitic ! The same spirit and feeling is now being exhibited by Indian civilians, and an attempt has been made to embody and enforce it in law.

To allow East Indians to think that it is possible that the courts may err is deemed unwise, by men who, like the late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, affirm that as India must be despotically governed, the more absolute you make the despotism the better. But we, the English people, can never consent to hold an empire, or any scrap of empire, on terms repugnant to all our ideas of natural right, of civil liberty, and of human justice. We know too well whither the despotic feeling once engendered, once permitted to grow and gain

strength, will lead even our English people, trained in the principles and accustomed to the habits of freedom at home. The civilian and the planter must alike learn that we will not withdraw from our fellow-subjects of any colour the right to challenge the mode or the effects of the administration of justice in inferior courts, and more particularly when life and liberty as well as property are at stake.

To return to the planting communities. Instances of magisterial lenity are canvassed at the Georgetown Club and in every estate verandah throughout the colony. If the magistrate is not openly insulted in some such case he is fortunate beyond his expectations. Hence he may, like Mr. Marston, sit in his court conscientiously anxious, as well as resolved to do

justice, but restrained in the operations of his judgment by the powerful influences which surround and oppress him.

In the case of Dilloo Mr. Marston had given a decision which in a later instance, before another magistrate, when the Coolie who defended it had been fortunate enough to secure a barrister to insist on the point, was proved to have been incorrect; and indeed a careful reading of the section of the ordinance by any sensible man would have been sufficient to show it. But the magistrate was not aware of the injustice he had done. He had looked at the letter of the law, and at that even not very particularly—it was not his nature to be precise and cautious. His mind had been prejudiced against the defendant. He thought he had given the latter every opportunity

of defending himself. He had run the risk of a quarrel with Drummond by a Quixotic leaning toward mercy. On the single point disputed by Dilloo, two witnesses, one a white man, had sworn that the defendant's answer was untrue in fact. There had been no counsel present to advocate the point of law urged by the Coolie—namely, that when he had done five tasks he was entitled to a week's discharge. Still less had there been anyone competent to press the equity of Dilloo's plea. Thus an innocent man had been swept into the sewer of justice—the victim of an unintentional, insensible partiality, resulting from a variety of complicated and protracted influences, and of habits of judicial administration which left no margin for equity and little room for mercy. The only person who

could have seen that justice was done and who would have ensured the proper presentation of the Coolie's case to the magistrate—namely, the Immigration Agent-General—was forbidden to appear in court without the permission of the Governor, and was kept carefully deficient of funds wherewith to employ a counsel.

One needs to study minutely, and on the scene, either slave or Coolie system, legislation, and administration, to appreciate the cunning ingenuity with which it is possible to create—to conceal from the outside world—to surround with delusive aspects of equity, and benevolence, and benefit—conditions of life which are intolerable to thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-creatures.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“UNCERTAIN, COY, AND HARD TO PLEASE.”

IF Miss Marston, on the evening of which we have spoken, displayed a temper so angelic as to disappoint her father of his wonted tonic anti-irritant, it would seem to have arisen more out of the natural perversity of womankind than from any pleasurable cause.

As the two women—Bella and Lutchmee—looked up at the manly figure which darkened the door of Dilloo’s hut, each uttered an exclamation. Craig himself was not less surprised at the fortuitous meeting than

they, but his self-possession was greater, as his nature was more slow.

“You here, Miss Marston!” he said, his eye wandering first to the superior beauty. “Have you been paying my nurse a visit?”

While he was speaking Lutchmee got up and approached him, and, gently taking up his hand, kissed it. Though she felt angry with herself at the absurdity of the emotion, Bella’s face flushed at this simple act of courtesy. On his part, the cool young gentleman, scarcely heeding Lutchmee’s act, stretched out the very hand she had kissed and shook Miss Marston’s white fingers with true overseer’s vigour.

“I am so glad to see some face I know,” he said quite unaffectedly. “I hope your father is well?”

A change had suddenly come over Miss

Marston. Five minutes before she was panting for just such an interview as this. But now that Mr. Craig stood before her, hale and hearty, addressing her with his quiet deliberate voice and manner, all her passion ran back into her silly little heart again, and left her to all outward appearance constrained, indifferent—almost chill.

“He is very well, I thank you,” she said stiffly. “How long have you been away?”

“Three months, Miss Marston. You must have been very agreeably occupied in the meantime?”

“Why?” she inquired, with a slight tinge of vexation in her tone, because she knew what was coming.

“To forget so easily how the time was flying.”

“Oh, no!” she said, recovering herself

with feminine celerity and equally feminine vindictiveness. “ There really was nothing to occupy me, but I had not thought upon the subject.”

I cannot believe that any recording angel dropped a tear upon that lie, or ought to have done so. When all these matters come to be settled one shudders to think of the strange little delicate casuistical issues that will have to be adjudicated on in the experience of many love-lorn damsels.

Craig felt the situation to be getting awkward. The foolish fellow was looking about him, instead of straight into the eyes of the perverse angel before him, or perhaps even he might have detected the tell-tale pleasure that glowed in them, deep behind the assumed coldness of the moment. He turned to Lutchmee : but here he had to

deal with another woman. Abashed and angered by his disregard of her greeting, she had stood glancing from one to the other with her dark eyes, over which a sullen cloud was beginning to brood. When he turned to her he held out his hand, but she did not move.

“What is the matter, Lutchmee? Are you not glad to see me?” He took her hand perforce and shut it up tightly in his huge grasp.

Lutchmee looked and felt inclined to draw it away, but forebore.

“Massa talk lady, talk Coolie woman noder time,” she said, with a lowering glance at Bella, whose face, now that Craig had turned away, was glowing in a joyous sunlight.

“No, no!” said Craig, touching her

brown cheek with his other hand. "Glad to see you, Lutchmee. It was you I came to see, you know."

O stupid Caledonian ! thick-headed, slow-blooded youth ! Why blurt out in words so plain a fact, so uncongenial, at the very moment when angelic fortune smiled upon you, bright and fostering ? "

"I am afraid," said a clear, cold voice behind him, "I am in the way. I must be going home. Good-bye, Lutchmee ! Good-day to you, Mister Craig ! Here, Carlo ! " And the young lady swept out of the hut like a swift bright cloud in a gale, before Craig could bring his deliberate forces into action either by speech or gesture. He did not understand Lutchmee's triumphant look, this field of woman's character being new to him. Had he done so he might have

escaped dangers which quicker, though less noble, natures would have easily foreseen.

He remained at the hut some time listening to Lutchmee's story, in her broken English, and with its simple, native candour of statement. As he listened, his mind gradually opened to the difficulties which surrounded her, and thence, as a natural corollary, threatened to involve him, for he was too grateful to her not to feel that it would be his duty to become her protector. He was naturally too just, even had he owed her nothing, to permit wrongs to occur under his observation without at least a protest. And the more the position was developed to his view, the graver it appeared.

When he bid Lutchmee adieu, she looked up to him with a half-caressing and entreat-

ing air of confidence, which touched him deeply. He took both her hands, and looked down upon her compassionately. She was to him a mere child.

“I will see Massa Drummond, Lutchmee, and get you into the hospital. You must take care what you say. Do not put yourself in the way of Massa Chester. See the doctor every time he comes, and if you want anything, or are in trouble, send for me.”

She kissed his hand again, and watched his tall figure as he walked away until he was out of sight. Before then, however, she was witness of an encounter in the distance and out of hearing. Master Martinho met and greeted Craig. Then he went on to say,—

“Ha! ha! Mr. Craig. Coming from the pretty Coolie’s already?” etc.

Craig looked at the fellow darkly. His hateful words and suspicions roused a deep and terrible anger in the young overseer's breast. He subdued it, however, by a violent effort, and bidding the man "Good-day," walked on moodily. It did not strike him at the time that this gross suspicion of him in the minds of the other overseers, coupled with his proper obligations to Lutchmee, might drive him into a dubious position, and be one of a chain of influences leading him to some perilous conclusion.

In the evening he met Drummond, who had been away all day at Georgetown. He was greeted by the manager with great cordiality. Naturally generous, the great planter had felt a real sympathy with the promising young overseer, who had undergone such danger in his service. But

there was a cloud on Drummond's brow. The private news among the leading men in the metropolis of the colony was of a disquieting nature. The sullenness of the Coolies in every part of the country alarmed their employers, and not a few of the latter suspected that they were on the eve of an important crisis. The number of cases brought before the magistrates were alarmingly increasing. On a distant estate on the West Coast an overseer had been beaten. The Inspector of Police received orders to be on the alert, and the Governor had been advised by some of the prominent agents to ask the General, commanding at Barbadoes, to hold troops in readiness to increase the force quartered at Eveleery.

Our young Scotchman, knowing nothing

of these things, hit upon a rather unfortunate topic.

“I find, sir,” he said to Drummond, “that Dilloo, the man who helped us in the scrimmage here, has been sent to jail.”

“Yes,” replied the manager, with a frown, “and serve him right,—a cantankerous rascal. Hunoomaun declares he is getting up a conspiracy, but I cannot get any trustworthy evidence of it. These fellows are intolerable liars.”

“I have been to see Dilloo’s wife, who was my nurse,” said Craig simply, “and I find she needs to go to the hospital. She is not well.”

“Oho!” said the manager. “Take care what you do with that young woman.”

“I shall do nothing, sir, that is not

strictly honourable," replied the overseer, colouring.

"I dare say not, Craig; but Dilloo will not be inclined to believe that if you take too keen an interest in her. Chester thinks she is shamming." *

"Well, sir, I naturally feel grateful to her for her attentions to me, and should like to befriend her. At least she might go to the hospital, and you could get Dr. Arden's report."

"Very well, Craig: but I want to say something to you. Anything you do for these people is sure to be misunderstood. I can see plainly enough that we are going to have a critical time. We must act cautiously and firmly. If any overseer like yourself shows

* In justice to Mr. Drummond it should be mentioned that it is not an infrequent case for women to sham illness to avoid the estate work.

any partiality or extra kindness, it will be injurious to discipline. You had better leave Dilloo and his wife to be dealt with by the ordinary estate rules ; otherwise you and I may have a misunderstanding. For this time let her have the benefit of your good word, but don't take advantage of me again."

CHAPTER XXXII.

CHARITY SEEKING NOT HER OWN.

THE day after Dilloo's conviction brought to the magistrate's house, in a light covered American waggon, drawn by a gay and handsome little horse, an important-looking gentleman, from whose appearance it would seem that he and the climate were on friendly terms.

As he emerged with some difficulty from the creaking vehicle, the lazy springs of which yielded in a very marked manner under his weight, he caught the eye of the magistrate, who hearing the sound of

wheels, had come down to welcome him, and seemed to be regarding him with some amusement.

“ Begad, Marston ! ” he exclaimed. “ How are you and the divine Miss Bella ? I’m thinking that getting out and into these crazy Yankee traps is the last thing they’re made for. And when you are in,” he added in an undertone, rubbing himself in one or two places, “ it’s like riding on a rail, without the tar and feathers, begad ! ”

“ Trying enough, Major, to a man of your weight and dignity. But, good heavens, man, what have you been doing with your face ? ”

“ Mosquitoes. Faith, I’m half killed with them, if not entirely ! It’s all owing to me good blood. They’re so thick along the shore road, I could scarcely see to drive.

They shut out the sun completely, every ray of it. Whisper now, and I'll tell you a fact," he added, with his eyes twinkling: "a rare fact this time, mind ye. I dropped me whip opposite Colman's, and, begad, sir, I was getting out of this machine to pick it up, when me foot slipped on that little scraper of a step there, and, on me word and honour, Marston, as an officer and a gentleman, if it hadn't been for the millions of mosquitoes, as thick as porridge, sir, that held me up, by George, sir, I should have fallen to the ground!"

"Good," said Marston, laughing. "That is extracting sweet from torments! Such a fact deserves to be recorded. Come along, and tell the story to Bella. She professes to be something of an entomologist. So thick that even *you* were borne up by their

wings: fifteen-stone ten, at least; say sixteen, in round numbers. Admirable!"

The magistrate led the way, followed by his guest, who maintained the deepest gravity, while he mopped his reeking features and bald head with an immense bandanna. Miss Marston, who had made some preparations of the toilette in honour of the visitor, received them in the verandah.

"Ah, Miss Marston!" cried the Major, after the usual salutations had been exchanged. "Here I am, more dead than alive. It's life to see you, lovely and blooming as ever. 'Ah! believe me, if all those endearing young charms—'" he stopped with a gesture.

"Yes, Major! Go on, please, if there's any more," replied the young lady.

"I can't, miss. Me feelings won't let

me. Faith, do ye see me face? I've been eaten up by millions of mosquitoes."

"I was not aware that the feelings you speak of settled in the face, Major. Come and let me give you some nectar to soothe your irritation."

"From such a Hebe, fair and sweet, who would not a poison take?" cried the Major, striking an attitude and taking the glass.

While the Major is trying to cool his heated frame with an iced punch and bitters, and repeating his remarkable experience to the scornful Miss Bella, we must put him on the stage in his proper dress and character.

Major O'Loughlin, one of the numberless tribe of the O'Loughlins of O'Loughlin in County Kerry, a district which in its situation is suggestive of extremes, was Intendant-General of British Guiana. There,

and in other Crown colonies where no public opinion exists to extinguish useless bureaus, there are many officials; and every official is something-or-other-General. The Major, a half-pay officer, had been more lucky than such *enfants perdus* of the army usually are, and it was perhaps for the very reason that he was not a fighting man; for soon after he had retired from his post in the old commissariat, a military friend—who, to his own surprise, had received from *his* friend, a Colonial Secretary, an appointment as Governor of Demerara—bethought him of the Major, and procured him the Intendant-Generalship, an office he had filled for twenty years. This had made him an *ex-officio* member of the Court of Policy, as the Legislature is called, and endowed him as well with a very respectable

salary. It would be cruel to inquire too closely into the value of the service which the Major rendered to the public of the colony in return for the money. That were, in the West Indies, an impertinent and invidious examination. He was supposed to regulate the internal economy of British Guiana,—to be, one may say, a Minister of the Interior. And although the Interior is almost uninhabited, yet the position might have been made, by an intelligent and conscientious officer, both an interesting and a useful one, for it included the management of the public lands and forests, the charge of the Indians who roamed therein, and a fatherly superintendence of the Negroes and Portuguese who form the real “people” of the colony. If it were not made by the Major as interesting and use-

ful as it might have been, no one should conclude that he was not potentially intelligent and conscientious.* In tropical climates those qualities are apt to become torpid, motive being not infrequently necessary to their development in some natures, and what motive can there be for steady labour in these wretched little colonies?

—I have known a man, a young one, born out of England, yet endowed with all the noblest characteristics of an Englishman, brave, bold, energetic, steady, thoughtful, possessed with a chivalrous sense of duty, who, exiled as an official to the murderous climate of Western Africa, and placed in a situation where there were no European eyes to cheer or to watch him, pursued with

* There is no office of this title in British Guiana. To avoid even the suspicion of making a personal attack I have created a characteristic bureau.

a strong, self-reliant love of work and of duty, the advantage of the Queen he served, the sowing in that wild ground of the seeds of civilization, the protection of the petty interests committed to his care. But to him no interest of his nation or his fellow-man was petty. The sincere devotion to right made of him a hero, unchronicled and unknown. And he, who had never wielded sword, called out to save the wretched subjects of his administration from the inroads of the slave-catcher, gathered a few dusky police, and led them through the terrible country to the lair of the enemy, and charging sword in hand at the head of his handful of men, received a load of slugs in his body which he will carry to his dying day. With a maimed hand and scarred breast, he lives still with

unwounded conscience and unblemished honour, a specimen of the Englishman whom we love in poetry to worship, but so often fail in prose to reward.—

A red-faced, jovial, loud, kindly Kerry-boy was the Major, with as varied, and, by his own account, as unique an experience of travel as Ulysses himself, but with less precision in his reminiscences. One thing was certain. He could stand any climate, and assimilate any quantity of edibles and drinkables.

“Begad,” he used to say, “nothing surprises me more than the easy way I see men die off in the tropics! Ay, and knowing that they’re to be buried, by Jove, within ten or twelve hours of their decease, before the corpse has had time to cool off! I’ve heard men meself argue, ‘ ’Twas the

brandy that slew so many.' Why, look at me, will ye! I've been drinking brandy these forty years in every climate from Indus to the Pole. It's true I was like St. Paul, ye know: 'me moderation was known unto all men.'—What! Ye're laughing, are ye? Begad, sir, I never took more than I could carry, and I'd like to see you take yer oath of that same! It's you young men that bring the tropics into bad odour with yer excesses. There was me own predecessor, I'm told 'twas of swizzles he died. How could a man die of a healthy beverage like that, I'd like to know? What's a swizzle? It's composed of good chemical elements entirely. There's nothing in it but good Hollands, and good Angostura (an anti-febrile mixture,—sure ye know it says so in four languages on the bottle!), and

good sugar and ice to cool it. Faith I could live on it easily for forty years. Who was it the yellow fever took off last, I'd like to know? Wasn't it Captain Sweeny, and he a teetotaler, poor foolish young man, in a climate that strains all yer mental and bodily powers in the way this does! Begad! sir, it's me own opinion that more people die of starvation than of eating and drinking."

The Intendant-General steadily stuck to his principles (though most people believed he was what he was, in spite of those principles), and exhibited the result in a portly form and a jolly rubicund visage. From the pink blushing apex of his benevolent head the colours improved in tone, until they reached perfection in the deep flush tints of his nose and double-chin. His

small, light blue eyes were always dancing merrily, belying his most serious protestations or affirmations by a twinkle unknown to any eye but that of an Irishman. A sprinkling of grey whisker on either cheek, and two tufts of rapidly-whitening hair over his ears, both of which he treated with a careful coquetry quite out of proportion to their importance in relation to his face, adorned the Major's countenance, over which there played the sunshine of a perpetual smile and the rain of a chronic perspiration. Hence his brightly-coloured dewy face suggested to one the idea of a stray bit of rainbow.

He was a bachelor ; a fact to which he always referred with a tragic sigh, as if to indicate that there were reasons he could divulge to account for it which must for-

ever remain a mystery; but, to use a lawyer's term, that it was not by his own *laches*.

In default of natural subjects or objects of affection (for a wife and children may be one or the other), the Major, who had saved some money, looked about him for wards of a less selfish philanthropy. He had some difficulty, however, in determining the channel in which his benevolence should run. There were hospitals on every estate, besides a large one in Georgetown. The fearful creatures, who at one time made the streets and highways of the colony hideous with their leprous deformities, had been gradually removed to the asylum on the Essequibo. The Major's mind was not genial to religion, and he was quite indisposed to

endow either church or chapel. By a quaint yet touching fancy, his heart yearned after some solace to his childlessness, and he resolved to found an orphan-asylum.

“Faith, sir,” he said to a friend, in an exquisitely innocent equivoque, “I’ll have a family of me own, and me a bachelor!”

Accordingly an orphan-asylum was built, of considerable size, with accommodation for fifty orphans and the necessary staff. This he surrounded with a pretty playground and garden, and established as managers a coloured-gentleman and his wife from St. Vincent. And then for the first time he began to turn his attention to the question, where the orphans were to come from? The Major and everyone else had taken it for granted

that the supply of fatherless and motherless children in a populous community like that of British Guiana was practically unlimited. But when the building had been finished, and the Governor and the Bishop had opened it with great *éclat*, and it was duly advertised in the newspapers that applications would be received for the admission of the orphan children of married persons deceased, the only *bona fide* application that came in was one on behalf of a poor little cripple who had been born with a crooked back, and walked about like a deformed Manxman on two legs and an arm. The poor Major, who had pictured to himself a house crowded with brown-skinned infants who should learn to look up to him as their benefactor, and, as they became ornaments

in coloured society, would recall the name of the good Intendant-General who had made them what they were, was terribly dejected by his ill-success. He thought that either the orphans' friends would not give them up, or the orphans of elder years were indisposed to barter their liberty for his charity. The Bishop, however, a shrewd man, knowing his diocese well, and its coloured laity particularly, hinted to the Major that, by restricting his beneficence to children of married persons, he was not only raising very delicate questions, but reducing his field of operations to very small dimensions. He had therefore resolved to throw open the blessings of his charity to children whose fathers and mothers were dead. But here again obstacles arose out of the anomalous

moral condition of Negro society, from the difficulty of ascertaining who the male parents were, a necessary preliminary to the inquiry whether they were dead. The good Intendant-General was at his wits' end. There was the orphanage and never an orphan. Besides, the missionaries of the Baptist, and Methodist, and Papal persuasions earnestly dissuaded their people from having anything to do with an institute of which the Major was the head and the Bishop a patron.

“O’Loughlin’s orphans” were the joke of the community. He was never met by a friend who did not ask him with emphatic interest, “Well, O’Loughlin, how many have you got?”—just as aggravating friends cross-examine a luckless fisherman or sportsman as to the contents

of his creel or bag with exaggerated inquisitiveness. The Major, however, disarmed everyone by his good-nature.

“Faith,” he would reply in a confidential whisper, “don’t mention it to a soul, but never a one. Its d—— hard a man can’t do all the good he wishes to do. But, listen, I’ve heard of one on the West Coast I’m in hopes of catching.”

And so the worthy philanthropist went about not exactly searching the highways and hedges, but the dams and bushes of British Guiana, his pockets filled with sweetmeats as bait for the young ones, and with money for the elders, should they prove to be open to such solicitation. His visit to the magistrate’s house was connected with this pursuit of charity. He wished to rummage Guineatown for orphan candidates.

“Do ye happen to know, Miss Bella, of ever an orphan or a deserted baby in the neighbourhood?” cried the Major, with an extra twinkle in his jocular eye. “There’s a beautiful place lying empty for want of them, and all me money spent to no use. Can’t ye hang a few parents for me now, Marston, and give me benevolence an object?”

“Well,” replied Marston laughing, “you should go to the Chief-Justice for that, you know; it’s beyond a magistrate’s power. There are some fellows who deserve hanging well enough at Guineatown, but that is most likely the very reason they won’t get it. I’ll tell you how you can get a shoal of orphans on one side at one blow,—that is, by killing off Drummond’s driver, Pete.”

“Ye don’t say so!” cried the Major,

dropping his knife and fork; "I'll have that monster watched till he dies. Could ye give me the address of his children?"

"No, nor any one else," said the magistrate, anxious to change the subject. "Go over to Guineatown yourself, to-morrow morning. I know little about the place, but there must be dozens of loose children to be picked up there for a glass or two of rum."

The Major, always sanguine, pricked up his ears at the hopeful prospect.

"Bedad, then I'll go and see. Will ye oblige me with the assistance of an angel, Miss Bella, and help me to persuade these stiffnecked fools to give up their babies? Faith, if ye'd only give me your countenance now, the place would be filled in a jiffy, sure."

“I’m afraid I can hardly do that,” said Miss Marston, glancing slyly at the rubicund visage of the Major. “But, I can at least accompany you and see the fun. It is quite a new idea to go fishing for orphans. I hope you have brought hooks and lines?”

“Now ye’re joking me!” cried the Intendant-General. “But it’s getting beyond a joke. Faith if I don’t get the creel filled very soon, it’s not fishing, but shooting, I’ll go in for. If there is no other way of catching orphans, I’ll make them, begad! I’ll not be baulked of me charity.”

The Major said this in so terrible a voice, and with so truculent an air, as he twisted his grey moustachios, that any one who had not looked into the depths of his blue eyes, would have thought him capable of doing what he threatened.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE PURSUIT OF CHARITY.

THE magistrate's household was generally astir at five o'clock; and at that hour next morning Sarcophagus roused the gentlemen from beneath their mosquito nets, and served them with fragrant cups of coffee, while Miriam performed the same office for Miss Marston. By six o'clock she and the gallant Major were wending their way along the dam towards Guineatown, to enjoy the novel sport of infant hunting.

Guineatown was a sprawling mischance

of wooden houses, huts, and shanties, swarming with Negroes, and unlike any village familiar to English eyes. No quaintly-gabled inn, no thatched and rose-embowered cottages, no lazy stream purling along under the bowing arches of an ancient bridge uniting the ends of a picturesque and straggling street, no ivy-covered church peeping from among the paternal trees; nothing but a treeless waste; in wet weather a swamp, in dry weather baked and cracked with torrid heat; intersected by mud causeways, which constituted its streets, all jagged and broken away in many places by draining floods, or the misapplied energy of mischievous children.

Alongside these ragged roads there stalked, in a sort of irregular skirmishing

line, the long-legged hovels of the inhabitants. Here and there, amid the box-like rudeness of these residences, there stood out conspicuous a few decent-looking shops, with their dazzling white clapboards and green jalousies, belonging to well-to-do Creole or Portuguese traders. Except in these rare instances, the village exhibited all the signs of indolent decay and good-for-nothingness, too familiar to him who visits the Negro at home in the West Indies, and especially in Demerara, where the natural characteristics of the climate and soil are so congenial to the cultivation of laziness. Already, as the visitors picked their way along the broken dam which looked like the glacis of a fort after a bombardment, they could see lazy Negroes lying prone on their faces in

the sun, or on their backs, idly kicking their heels into the air. To these, now and then, women could be seen carrying roasted plantains. Over the road, and in and out among the shaky props of the hovels, ran numbers of naked or half-naked youngsters of both sexes, at sight of whom the Major's eyes twinkled.

“Do ye think now, Miss Marston, if I had an omnibus here, I couldn't run off with a dozen or two of these children? Faith, one's so like another, I don't see how their own fathers and mothers, if they have any, and God only knows whether they have or not, would recognise them dressed in the livery of the Kerry Orphanage. Look here now!” stopping at a group of six or seven, whose plump black bodies and limbs shone with health,

save where the cleaving mud had left the evidence of their loving caresses of mother earth, "is there any one of ye an orphan? If there is, hold up yer hand."

The children, all about six or seven years old, stood in a group close together, leaning their brown shoulders against each other, with their fingers in their mouths, their curly hair standing stiff and crisp above their ample foreheads,—rather a pose for a phrenologist who should examine those large craniums for any striking qualities!—their bright black eyes and all their dental ivories glistening, as the Major took a bag out of his pocket and disclosed some of that brilliant and resistless bait to infancy, called "bull's-eyes."

"Now, quick: who's an orphan?" cried the Major, holding out between his finger

and thumb a tremendous lump of saccharine brilliancy.

The shoulders rubbed together, the little bodies quivered with supple ecstasy, the bright eyes danced black and white; but not a child spoke or came forward.

“Here’s another!” cried the Major, getting excited. “Now then,—who’s an orphan?”

The children gazed wistfully at the bait, but made no attempt to take it. Miss Marston took one of the seductive lumps into her fingers, and held it up, saying, “Come to me.”

In an instant the whole party charged at the daring young lady like a troop of wild colts; and before she could prevent it, the tallest urchin jumped up, snatched the dainty from her hand, and, rolling down

the slope of the dam, made off to the maternal nest, with one side of his face enlarged to a monstrosity. The Major, however, by a rapid flank movement, got into the rear of the remainder, and called on the enemy to surrender.

"Now, me dear children," he said, holding up a handful of the great peppermint balls, "here ye are, if ye'll tell me where I'll find an orphan."

He looked so greedily at them all the while, and with so benevolent an earnestness, that Bella, catching a glimpse of his face, laughed out loud. The children instantly set up a sympathetic roar.

"Oh, my dear Major!" she cried, "forgive me. But you look as if you were going to eat them."

"So I am," growled the Major, "if they

don't capitulate. Do ye hear?" in a terrible voice. "Will you go home with me?"

The children scattered like a group of flies, shouting "No, massa!" and were soon safe from pursuit.

O'Loughlin took off his hat and wiped his forehead with vexation: the sun was growing hot. This act was received with a burst of laughter from the piccāninnies. "Hi: see de white gen'leman's head! Got no wool on: hi, hi!"

That ancient African "Uncle Ned," whose capital and capillary defects have so long been a subject of musical ridicule among us, was amply avenged on the outraged dignity of the Major, who, blushing a deeper red than ever, rapidly donned his hat, and threw an angry glance at his

tormentors. But Miss Bella walked gently towards them; and beckoning to one, a girl, a little bolder than the rest, asked her if she knew what an orphan was? To which the reply was, "No, sabby."

"Have you all got fathers and mothers?"

"Me hab fader and moder. Sally, Tom, Zeke," pointing to some companions.

"Sam, he fader dead."

On which, Sam rammed his knuckles into his eyes, and set up such a howl as a sucking jackal might vent at the loss of its dam.

The Major pricked up his ears; and, taking a mean advantage of Sam's absorbing grief, pounced down upon him in military style, and captured him alive, but without dress or accoutrements.

“Ha!” said the Major, out of breath, holding on with needless and I dare say somewhat painful tightness of grasp, while the child wriggled and roared most lustily. “Hurrah, Miss Bella! Here’s a prize. Ask them, please, where his mother lives?”

But meantime the rest of the children, alarmed by this hostile movement, had scampered off, leaving the child too full of his grief to give any information. The Major crammed a huge bolus of sugar into his mouth, and thus effectually gagged him. But his roars had reached maternal ears; and as the gallant victor was proceeding to lead his captive in triumph towards the village to make inquiries, a slovenly black woman rushed out of the nearest hut and encountered him.

“What you do my chile, you fellah?
Let um go!”

“My good woman,” cried the Major, gently repulsing her as she tried to seize the boy’s unoccupied arm, the urchin seconding her aim with all his force, “permit me one moment. My dear good woman, stay a moment! I wish to do him a kindness—Oh, confound the little rascal!” shouted he in a rage, suddenly letting his captive go; for that precious infant had succeeded in getting his head round to the Major’s hand, and had taken a large grip of the back of it fairly between his teeth, leaving a very plain record of their visit in blue and red. “Take him away, you wretched woman! I meant to make his fortune, but he is as good-for-nothing as yourself. I’ll have nothing to do with him.”

The Major was well nigh getting into trouble by his angry exclamations, for several villagers of both sexes had come up, and the woman was furious; but Bella again came to his assistance and soothed the virago's anger. Miss Marston was well known by sight as the magistrate's daughter; but none of the people recognised the Major, either personally or officially, and his present proceedings were looked upon with no little indignation.

“What for you go steal dis young lady's chile, sir?” said a gallant Negro, who had turned up off his back, and who displayed a capacity of sinew which an Englishman might envy, through a fringe of rags of which an Italian would be ashamed.

“My good people,” said the Major, “look here! I'm Major O'Loughlin,

Intendant-General. You all know me. I have come down here on an errand of kindness. I have built an asylum for orphan children, and if any of you know where there are any children who have no father or mother, I will take them, dress them, feed and educate them free. Do you hear? all free,—for nothing. Now can any of you take me where there are any children about here who have no one to take care of them? or whose mothers would be willing to let me take care of them?"

They shook their heads. One ancient hag however,—grey, wrinkled and toothless, smiling a malicious smile, replied,—

"Dere's Susan Sankey, she hab piccaninny. No fader, I guess;—least de fader don't live about dis town, reckon,—"

“Tell me, please, where she lives?” interposed Miss Marston; who seeing the group were receiving new accessions every moment, and in every state of dress and undress, was anxious to change the scene.

“Ober dere,” was the reply, emphasized by many dusky digits; and in the direction indicated marched the Major and Miss Marston, with great gravity, the crowd attending them at a respectful distance with many a giggle and whisper.

“What Susan Sankey say? Yah, yah!” laughed a grotesque fellow, in a shirt and demi-pantaloons airy with holes, with a mouth so full of teeth you wondered he ever got it shut. “Yah, yah!” softly murmured the chorus.

“White folks come take away Susan

Sankey's baby," cried two or three to the new comers, who were continually increasing the crowd. "Piccaninny hab no fader. Officer goin' take um, I guess."

Now Susan Sankey, quite unconscious of the movement in the village and the designs on her unworthy offspring, was making a fire under her house to cook a breakfast for herself and her piccaninny. The latter was propped up in a box which stood upon the landing of the steps by which her rooms were reached. Being in complete dishabille,—in truth, having on only the garment in which she had slept,—she was unprepared for visitors, and we must fairly say had no good reason to expect them at that early hour of the morning. Great indeed was her astonishment on rising from the fire, which she

had been aiding with a vigorous exhalation, when she heard the murmur of an approaching mob, and discerned the Major and Miss Bella Marston close upon her with their undesired attendants. In an instant, drawing her calico garment about her form as closely as possible, she darted up the stairs: a movement which delighted the crowd, some of whom shouted after her,—

“Hi, Miss Sankey, take care piccaninny: officer come, take um away.”

The Major stamped his foot and turned upon the crowd.

“Get out of the way, ye fools: d’ye hear! I don’t mean to do any harm to the woman, or the baby either. Do, my dear Miss Marston, go up and speak to her, while I manage these people. Good

heavens," cried the Major, desolately, "what one has to endure to do a good deed! By heaven, if ever I undertake to do another, may I be shot!"

Miss Marston, ascending the stairs and disappearing into the room, would have been followed instantly by a dozen lithe youths of both sexes, but for the Major, who, flourishing his stick, threatened the bastinado if they did not desist. But Susan Sankey, who had caught up her child, had retreated to her bedroom, and barred the door; through which she shrieked her fears and maledictions in a manner so hysterical, that poor Miss Marston could get no entrance for her own quiet and dulcet accents. On hearing this, the Major, who, like a gallant man, was extremely vexed at the awkward-

ness of the position for his companion, resolved to beat a retreat; and with that view mounting the steps, delivered a second address, assuring the crowd that he had none but a benevolent object, begging them to send him from the village candidates for the benefits of his charity; and he ended by throwing his bag of sweetmeats and a handful of small silver into the throng. This last motion was received with yells of delight, followed by a general skirmish, and shrieks of laughter and pain from the struggling mass. Taking advantage of the diversion, the unsuccessful infant-hunters retired in unbroken order, but with a haste not altogether dignified.

The Major was sadly depressed by the incidents of the morning, and their bad

success: and only recovered himself after a hearty breakfast.

“Miss Marston, dear,” said he, over his cigar in the verandah, while a suspicion of moisture dimmed his eyes, “except in love, now, where all yer sex are so cruel, did ye ever hear of a man being so disappointed in looking for a chance to be kind? Faith, but I was a fool not to send the money home to me native county, where, I’ll warrant ye, the number of orphans they’d make for the purpose, if it was necessary, would fill it twice over; though begad, I believe a supply would be the last difficulty they would have. Only, ye see, in the old country, they’re mighty fond of scrimmaging over charity funds, and the Protestants and Roman Catholics might find out some way of wasting the money

in litigation. So after all, may be, I'm better with it here, where I can see it, and look after it. But, see, now, I tell you, as sure as my name's O'Loughlin, if I don't get these Negurs to supply me place with inmates, faith, I'll just take the gun and go shooting Indians up beyond the settlement, and bring down their children and make Christians of them in spite of themselves. Sure, Providence never meant a place like that to be built and kept empty."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

COLONIAL GOVERNORS AND THE LOCAL
ARISTOCRACY.

INTENSE was the excitement, and extreme the heat of feeling in the naturally tropical atmosphere of the capital of Raleigh's famous Guinea. The heart of the capital, that is its club,—morning house-of-call for tonic “swizzles,” afternoon lounge for whist and billiards,—not untempered by draughts of the aforesaid tonics, or of sparkling mixtures of iced soda and sterner liquors,—was violently palpitating. Very rarely were its latticed verandah

and wide rooms so crowded with members, and so filled with a lively roar of conversation. Merchants from Water Street, estate attorneys, government officials, plantation managers — the latter receiving new and warm additions, as men hastily rode or drove up to the hotel opposite—all were loud, animated, effervescent. Never had the resources of the intelligent Creole who mixed the amber and mahogany-coloured fluids into cool, though not cooling elixirs, been so heavily taxed. For the matter in hand required all the force, if not the clearness, which stimulants could give it.

What was the matter? A day or two before, Mr. Williams, one of three or four barristers who earned a precarious subsistence by picking up the legal crumbs

which fell from the tables of an Attorney and Solicitor-General, — for these little Crown colonies are not considered to be fully shotted in a legal sense without being loaded with a brace of law officers, — had presented to his Excellency Mr. Thomas Walsingham, a memorial, purporting to be signed or marked by some twenty thousand Indians, and several hundred Chinese. This bold document set forth in simple but decided terms a list of grievances of which the petitioners, for the memorial assumed the form of a petition, complained, and which they prayed the Governor to examine, and in Her Majesty's stead to have redressed.

Some of these grievances no doubt would seem very small to the official eyes in Downing Street, or to that portion of the

English people to whom grievances have become a nuisance, being so various and so frequent, and so persistently presented to public view by energetic societies. What is the retention of a few small coins from the dregs of the Indian population of a West India colony, to a people engaged in the government of world-wide Empire, sympathizing with suffering populations in Europe, spending hundreds of thousands in suppressing the African slave trade? What if men and women are occasionally imprisoned by mistake, or wronged by careless magistracy and bad interpreters, or deprived of rights and privileges which have been assured them by contract? Is there not the contract? Are there not laws? Are these laws not administered by Englishmen? Is there not an English

executive? Above all, is not sugar (a valuable commodity much used in this world, and helping to sweeten it), produced by this system at a cost which makes some Englishmen, who are high in position, and conspicuous for their influence, rich? Are you to jeopardise this splendid trade? This is not a good working grievance. There is not enough blood and outrage about it,—though neither are absolutely wanting if you did but examine and see,—it is altogether too small a matter to challenge public attention, and excite great popular demonstrations, and stir up public enthusiasm.

When Mr. Williams, who did not lack the quality of forwardness, presented himself in the little room appropriated to the really hard work of Governor Walsingham,

followed by a Negro clerk carrying a prodigious cylindrical parcel, his Excellency was taken aback.

“Good morning, Mr. Williams,” said the Governor, who had some inkling of what was coming. “What is this you have brought in with you? You might have left it outside with my secretary.”

“I have explained to him already, your Excellency, what it is, and I bring it in with his permission, as it is for personal presentation. It is a petition, your Excellency,” here Mr. Williams drew himself up and began to speak in a solemn oratorical tone, “from twenty thousand Coolies and——”

“O stop! Mr. Williams,” cried his Excellency, rising for the first time and looking at the roll of paper as if it were a parcel

of dynamite. "A petition from Coolies, Mr. Williams? Really, this is very irregular and awkward. How did it get in here, eh? I must consider what I ought to do about this, you know. In fact the law officers must be consulted about it. It is a very serious business, Mr. Williams, quite unprecedented indeed!"

"Undoubtedly, your Excellency," replied the barrister. "And for that reason I trust your Excellency will consider it a matter worth your attention. Ahem!" starting off again in the sonorous tones of his professional practice. "This, your Excellency, is a petition to you, as Her Majesty's representative, and presented in the exercise of an undoubted constitutional right, setting forth the grievances——"

"Stop, Mr. Williams, if you please. I

cannot allow you to get the petition presented in that way: take it away until I can consult the Attorney-General."

"Surely, sir," replied Mr. Williams, who was as Welsh as his name, and pertinacious as any Celt: "Surely your Excellency cannot consider it necessary to consult the law officers of the Crown whether a petition is to be received or not?"

"Pardon me, Mr. Williams," said his Excellency, flushing up, "I cannot allow you, sir, to question me as to what I will or will not consider necessary. You see I am not Her Majesty, and only her representative, and I am not quite clear that the same rules would apply to me that apply to her! You should send it to London, Mr. Williams, or to Windsor, or Balmoral, or Osborne, or — wherever it

ought to go, Mr. Williams," said the Governor, after pausing as if he were about to suggest "Jericho," or some less agreeable place; "but you see I may compromise myself by accepting such a petition. You see I don't even know what is in it, Mr. Williams."

The Governor walked about the room in great agitation.

"Your Excellency can only ascertain what is in it, I respectfully submit," replied Mr. Williams, "by perusing the petition. I will just unroll it."

"Oh, for God's sake! Mr. Williams. No, sir,—certainly not!" cried the Governor. "I say *stop*, sir! I insist on your not unrolling it!" for the daring advocate was in the act of untying the obnoxious roll. "Take it away, sir," shouted the

Governor in a rage to the black clerk, while he violently rang the secretary's bell. The clerk and the dangerous parcel disappeared, and the secretary entered.

"Mr. Coulthurst," quoth the Governor, "I am surprised that you should have permitted an important interview of this kind to take place without a previous arrangement. Here is Mr. Williams, who brings in a large,—ah,—roll of paper, which he states is a memorial, or petition, or whatever you like to call it, from twenty thousand Coolies, sir, and you show him into my room as if he had come for a morning call!"

"I beg your pardon, sir; I thought it would be received as a matter of course."

"And what right had you to suppose anything of the kind, sir?" roared the

Governor. "It may—I say it *may*—contain statements of a libellous character; it may contain charges against the Government——"

"It does," interrupted Mr. Williams, sententiously.

"Pray don't interrupt me, sir! I was going to add it may even implicate ME in those charges; and are you not aware, sir, after all your experience, that if it is once received by me it becomes a State paper, and may be called for by the Home authorities, and printed in a blue book?"

The secretary stood mute, while the irrepressible Mr. Williams unfeelingly interposed once more,—

"Excuse me, your Excellency, that is precisely what we desire."

"Exactly, sir," exclaimed the Governor

in a fury. "And who—and who the deuce are '*we*,' sir, I should like to know? Eh? A parcel of poor immigrants and a beggarly barrister, making money no doubt out of hatched discontent!"

"Pardon me, your Excellency," replied Mr. Williams, with dignity: "I cannot remain here to listen to such language even from your lips. In the discharge of my duty to my clients I have simply to ask you once more whether you will receive the petition I have tendered to you?"

"No: I will not!" said his Excellency, sitting down with an emphatic bounce in his chair. "And I wish you good morning, sir."

Mr. Williams bowed and retired. He had often before shown in that fiery colony a dangerous command of himself. More-

over he knew his man, and was resolved to await his opportunity. The effect of red pepper is rarely lasting.

And in truth as the Governor's temper cooled, wiser thoughts supervened. He knew Mr. Williams to be both a determined and a fearless person, possessing indeed those qualities which easy-going persons of a malicious and envious turn call "cantankerous." Every Governor is possessed with a wholesome dislike of a hostile reference to the Colonial Minister. The power which that great official has over the destinies of millions, through his power over Her Majesty's viceroys in our world-wide empire, is but little apprehended by the British public, and would rather astonish it were it to take the trouble to investigate the matter. Governor Wal-

singham, however, knew it by experience, and therefore he consulted the Attorney and Solicitor-General. Neither of these gentlemen,—without any impeachment of their honesty, be it said,—dared to give other counsel than that he gave, namely, that such a petition, since it was in their opinion in its very nature an act calculated to provoke a breach of the peace, and dangerously excite popular discontent, ought not to be received. They lived on and out of the planting community, and their thoughts were as planters' thoughts, and their ways as planters' ways.

Furthermore, the Council was called together to consider the matter, as information came in from all quarters that the Coolies—among whom news runs with almost electric speed—were manifesting a

turbulent and refractory spirit: I use the Governor's own words. The Council consisted of official members and planter representatives in equal proportions; some of the officials, by the way, being themselves planters or relatives of planters. These also advised the Governor not to receive the petition. In the meantime, it may be observed, no one of them knew what the petition contained.

But Mr. Williams was not by any means to be check-mated by his legal superiors or defeated by resolutions of the Council. He executed a sharp strategic movement. He addressed a strong letter to the Colonial Minister in London; giving a graphic account of the interview between the Governor and himself, and enclosing a copy of the petition. This he sent to his Excellency

under cover with a letter, in which he requested the Governor in the usual way to forward the communication to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. This obliged the Governor to act on his own responsibility. He knew that if he declined to forward the documents, they would be sent to the Colonial Office, and explanations would be demanded. It is very awkward for an official to be asked for explanations upon information which he himself has not conveyed. It is impossible to avoid the feeling in such a case that a man is on his defence, and in that very feeling the assailant gets an advantage. So after spending a sleepless night, in which his pride and his caution had a severe struggle, his poor Excellency arrived at the decision that it was the better policy in his own interest to

accept and forward the memorial, accompanied by his own remarks, which would then reach the Minister at least as soon as the charges.

Mr. Williams was not surprised when the Vice-regal Secretary entered his office and begged him to withdraw his letters and wait upon the Governor with the dynamite parcel.

Thus at the instance of a game little Welshman, whose life, and wife, and home were at the time by no means as secure as one would have been proud to assert of them in an English colony, *one* was scored, to begin, for the Indians,—a success, however, that might only be a precursor of sorrows. For the rage of the planters knew no bounds ; and here it was, puffing and exploding viciously in the Georgetown Club,

and intensified by repeated stimulants of exciting spirits. Fists were shaken with a vigour singularly inconsistent with the relaxing character of the climate ; oaths and exclamations, being most emphatic, rose above the general din. No one regarded the billiard tables, round which the crowd surged. In the wide verandah, in the middle of a group of the principal men, stood Drummond, dealing with His Excellency in no measured terms. "Old woman" was the least derogatory of the expressions freely used in describing Her Majesty's representative ; but the reader may be spared the vocabulary of West Indian rage.

"We must have him out of this, I say, as soon as possible, the chicken-hearted idiot ! What call had he to go and accept a heap

of dirty foolscap, libelling every gentleman in the community?"

"Hear, hear!" cried a ruffianly-looking manager from the Arabian Coast, whose name was Harris, and who meant what he said.

"The whole thing has been concocted between that rascally little Portugee and that sneaking attorney. If their houses are not burned down by to-morrow night, it won't be because they don't deserve it."

"Hear, hear!" cried the chorus.

If Drummond, generally a cool-headed and steady-tongued man, respected in the colony for his judgment, was so overcome by his anger, what must have been the state of mind of others more fiery by nature and injudicious in practice? A new voice, however, was raised by an exceedingly prim

and smooth-spoken gentleman, Mr. Ingledew, one of the wealthiest and ablest agents in the colony. In such communities these calm, cold-blooded persons soon acquire a singular and dangerous mastery. Cautious never to be guilty themselves of any excess, they secretly encourage it in others, and no Commission is sharp or shrewd enough to convict them of folly or error.

“Gentlemen,” he said, after clearing his throat in a careful and precise manner which commanded attention, “let us proceed to discuss this question in a manner becoming its gravity. The subject naturally divides itself under three heads. There is, first, the treacherous combination—I think I may, without exaggeration, term it a conspiracy (hear)—between Gonzales, Williams, and certain other person unknown, to in-

flame the animosity of the Coolies against those whom I and you and every one conversant with the subject know to be their best friends. It will become the imperative duty of every manager to ascertain what individuals among the Coolies have been specially prominent in this criminal incitement of the labourers. Then there is, secondly, the question of the course which it is our duty to pursue with regard to the unpatriotic, unnatural, and revolutionary conduct of—I blush while I allude to his origin—that *white man* Williams (loud murmurs). Gentlemen, I beseech you, endeavour to repress your feelings. It may be true, it is true, that no punishment, however vindictive, could sufficiently repay the scoundrel who lends his miserable abilities in a mercenary manner to

encourage in the minds of poor ignorant labourers ideas and aims which are so utterly impracticable (loud applause, testified in every possible manner), and I may add, which, if once they are permitted to gain possession of the Coolie mind, will render it impossible for your agriculture, your commerce, your trade to continue to maintain even the qualified success which it now experiences. Lastly, gentlemen, there is the deplorable feebleness and vacillation of—hem!—the Executive.”

The uproar of groans might almost have reached His Excellency's ear through the open windows of Government House.

“Hem, gentlemen!” continued Mr. Ingledew, raising his voice to reach the enlarging circle of his auditors, “with regard to the Executive, I fear nothing is

at present to be done. Unhappily we cannot depose him : we are not an independent people. He has resolved to forward the scurrilous document, which is a libel and an insult upon everyone connected with the planting interest, to the Colonial Minister. We must leave the Executive, gentlemen, to be dealt with by our friends, the ‘ Sugar-growers Committee,’ in London. But the immediate question before us is, how are we to meet the danger with which we are menaced,—of robbery, of assassination ?—Ah ! ”

The speaker’s word proved to be far nearer the fact than he intended or imagined ; for at the moment a revolver, incautiously waved by an inspired manager, went off with a loud report, and the ball whistled close to the orator’s head.

“Ahem, gentlemen!” continued Mr. Ingledew, after the excitement caused by this incident had subsided, and as he wiped away the dew of fright which had gathered on his brow, “the most important consideration of the moment is one of life and death. We are few in number, scattered through a large population of labourers whom these conspirators have hounded on to seek our destruction.”

The audience grew fearfully agitated. He had touched the sore point with them all. They trembled, as well they might, at any manifestation of a sense of right or wrong by the poor people whom they professed to be treating with romantic kindness!

“Gentlemen, we must take instant measures for the preservation of our lives and property. Williams at least must be

arrested and the Portuguese Gonzales. The police force must be increased, and all the whites sworn in as special constables. I should further recommend the proclamation of martial law, and that a schooner be sent to Barbadoes with a requisition for more troops," etc., etc.

Thus Mr. Ingledew. His speech was cunningly conceived to hit the popular feeling and animate the general apprehensions. His hint was at once taken. Drummond was called to the chair,—that is, he sat upon the edge of a billiard-table, while resolutions were rapidly passed, demanding the arrest of Williams for aiding Coolies,—who are, after all, English subjects,—in exercising a right confirmed to Englishmen by Magna Charta. A Committee immediately went to wait upon the Governor.

He received them civilly, but recoiled without any hesitation from taking the responsible steps on which they insisted.

When the deputation, failing in their aim, returned unsuccessful from Government House, the agitation in the club became terrific. It is almost impossible to convey to home readers an idea of the state of mind into which British gentlemen can work themselves when they constitute, as in the Mauritius or in Barbadoes, an alarmed minority in the midst of a great community of natives and imported servants, whom they will protest to you and the rest of the world they govern with even undue generosity. The outer public (I should say to these self-satisfied Pharisees) cannot help sometimes suspecting that when you know that those of another colour

are one or two hundred to one, and that they have not received perfect justice, or have actually received gross injustice at your hands, your equanimity cannot bear the test of the discovery that the majority have awakened to their wrongs, and mean in one way or another to have them remedied. And if the remedy is likely to touch your pockets your anger will doubtless be proportionately increased.

But now a new and startling incident drew the attention of the whole company to the verandah of the club.

One of the members, looking down the street through the jalousies, had detected Gonzales, who, fresh from an interview with Akaloo, was really at the moment on his way to see Mr. Williams, and was approaching the club. Unluckily for him he

did not observe, until he was too near to retreat, the flashing eyes that glared upon him from the jalousies, or hear the mutterings of the coming storm. The rude-looking manager from the Arabian Coast, before-mentioned, Mr. Harris, stood among the planters, whipping his powerful leg with a coarse "raw-hide." As the Portuguese advanced, this gentleman slowly descended the steps leading from the verandah of the club, and in a few strides had come up face to face with Gonzales and seized him by the collar. The Portuguese paled and winced for a moment, and heartily wished he had had in his hand the long-bladed knife which lay in its sheath in a cupboard not far from his bed. He recovered himself in a moment, and said quietly :

"Will you be so good as to let me pass, sir?"

“Let you pass! you d— thief!” roared the other. “I suppose you are on your way to Williams’. Eh? Eh?” he said, imitating the well-known manner of the Portuguese. “What are you doing with the Coolies?”

“I am doing nothing, sir, but what is perfectly legal, sir! Let me pass, sir, I pray you. Otherwise I shall be obliged to charge you with this assault.”

“Oh!” cried the other. “I’ll give you something, you Portuguese hound, to charge me with. Take *that!*”

A fierce, wicked cut went across the smooth face of the Portuguese, and left its mark in a red and blue pattern, a mark that the resentful skin would never lose. Hard again and cruel was the second blow that came down over the now un-

covered head. Heavy and cruel yet upon the sinking form, the rain of blows which began to draw their bloody lines through the thin white clothes. It was a long and brutal punishment that the furious maniac inflicted on his shrieking victim, until he himself was weary, and the victim had ceased to cry out. And all the while that group of manly Britons in the club, with clenched teeth, and a general aspect as of men who thought a wholesome thing for the State was being done, looked on without an effort to interfere. Among them were several officials, who like Gallio assumed indifference, or else openly approved the act. When Mr. Harris, heated by his exertions, left the unconscious Portuguese, and rejoined the company, he received a perfect ovation.

“Quite right, old fellow. We’ll stand to you !”

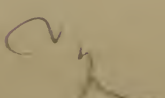
And they did.

Gonzales lay a long while in the afternoon sun. None of the mixed crowd of Portuguese, Negroes and Coolies, which speedily gathered dared to render him any assistance. At length two women from the Catholic convent came with a litter, and, with the aid of two or three of his friends, conveyed him to their retreat. The Portuguese was well known and respected by his countrymen, and never had the few British residents of the colony been in more fearful peril than on that night,—not from their suspected Coolies, but from the incensed and fiery Portuguese who thronged the streets. Had there been a man for the situation, very few letters to Europe would

have gone out by the next steamer from the Demerara river.*

* An incident similar to that in the text happened at Mauritius, and is related in the Commissioners' Report.—Monsieur de Plevitz, who took an interest in Coolie grievances and presented a memorial on their behalf, was severely beaten with a stick by a cowardly planter, who was afterwards fined for the assault. The planters of the Mauritius, who would, I dare say, feel it a deep indignity to be called anything but gentlemen, manifested a ruffianly complicity in the dastardly act by subscribing a shilling a-piece to pay the fine. Such an incident never occurred in Georgetown. I speak from a fortunate experience when I say that I hope it was practically impossible among the men who used to frequent that institution when I was there. The reader will remember that the developments of the Coolie system in all our colonies are being grouped in one scene for the sake of convenience.

END OF VOL. II.



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 084214995